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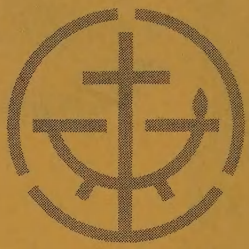
CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF AMERICAN METHODISM



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CENTENNIAL HISTORY

OF

AMERICAN METHODISM,

INCLUSIVE OF ITS ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION IN 1784
AND ITS SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT UNDER
THE SUPERINTENDENCY OF

FRANCIS ASBURY.

WITH SKETCHES OF THE CHARACTER AND HISTORY OF ALL THE
PREACHERS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF
THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE;

ALSO,

AN APPENDIX,

SHOWING THE NUMERICAL POSITION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH AS COMPARED WITH THE OTHER LEADING EVANGELICAL
DENOMINATIONS IN THE CITIES OF THE UNITED STATES;
AND THE CONDITION OF THE EDUCATIONAL
WORK OF THE CHURCH.

BY

JOHN ATKINSON, D.D.

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1884.

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NEW YORK.

TO MESSRS. DAVID TAYLOR AND SAMUEL STERLING,

Jersey City, New Jersey.

MY DEAR FRIENDS: When, several months ago, very unexpectedly to myself, you, as the official representatives of Trinity Church, kindly wrote to me in reference to again becoming its pastor, I replied that it would give me joy to be restored to the relation which I had sustained to you with so much pleasure to myself for nearly three years immediately previous to my transfer to a Western pastorate in the fall of 1875; and also that I was engaged upon a history of American Methodism which must be completed. This last fact did not, I am glad to know, deter you, nor the officiary of Trinity Church, from requesting my appointment, and accordingly Bishop Andrews, on June 2d, 1884, appointed me to the Church which I have known so long, and which I love so well. Gratified that my task is finished, I now lay the result before you. I trust you will approve the attempt I have made to set up an humble way-mark on the path of time as a memorial, in some sense, of the first Centennial anniversary of that remarkable Church among whose laity you have so long stood, and which you have served in various official relations with so much zeal and devotion. My return to your pulpit gave me facilities for the completion of my undertaking, which otherwise I would not have enjoyed.

I have followed the logical, rather than the chronological, method in the arrangement of my facts. Still I have not been indifferent to the order of time. Events, however, frequently have important relations independently of their chronological order, and that relation I have kept in view. This fact will be apparent in much of the book.

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I have seen that the American Methodist Church, under the Superintendency of Francis Asbury, was scarcely any thing else than an organized revival. I have, therefore, written of it as a movement and work of God for the salvation of men.

I have not been indifferent to the literary execution of this work, yet I claim for it but one thing, namely, that it contains illustrations, I might almost say sections, of our denominational history, which have not been incorporated into any of the previous histories of American Methodism, and portions of which have never before been printed.

To many friends and strangers I am under special obligations for important favors. I would especially and gratefully mention David Creamer, Esq., of Baltimore, whose co-operation has been of inestimable value. Also the Rev. Dr. Drinkhouse, of the same city; Mrs. Lee and Miss Colbert, daughters of the Rev. William Colbert; B. Major, Esq., Petersburg, Virginia; President Stephens, of Adrian College; Miss Sadie Clegg, and the Rev. Dr. J. T. Ward. I also acknowledge the aid afforded me by Professor Wilbert Ferguson, of Adrian College, and F. S. Petter, Esq., of Jersey City. I am indebted to my friend, Bishop Merrill, for an important contribution. Bishop Walden, also, has placed me under obligation by his courtesy. Last, but not least, I mention my great indebtedness to my friend of many years, the Rev. Henry A. Buttz, D.D., President of Drew Theological Seminary. But for the large and generous kindness of Dr. Buttz my work, in its present form, could scarcely have been issued at this time. To a number of other persons, who have kindly helped me, I am sincerely grateful.

And now, my dear friends, I offer this product of my humble pen to you, to Methodism, and to the Church of Jesus Christ, of which Methodism is an important part. May God, to whom I adoringly consecrate it, accept it, and use it in the service of the kingdom of his dear Son.

Affectionately yours in the Gospel of Christ,

JOHN ATKINSON.

TRINITY, JERSEY CITY, *November* 18, 1884.

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INTRODUCTION.

Rise of Methodism in America.

THE persons whom God honored to introduce Wesleyanism in America are known, and must be held in everlasting remembrance. The time of its first introduction is not certainly known. Whether Robert Strawbridge preached and formed a society in Maryland before Philip Embury began to preach in New York, is a question which has not yet been determined by thoroughly authenticated dates. The date of the beginning of Embury's work—1766—is sufficiently clear. That relating to Strawbridge, and the first society which he formed in Maryland, is not so certain. The introductory sketch of the Rise of Methodism in this country, which appeared in the early editions of the Discipline, gives no precise date respecting the origin of the first society in Maryland. It indicates that, in the view of its authors, Embury's work was begun before that of Strawbridge. Asbury, however, by a remark in his Journal, in 1801, gives historical precedence to the Maryland society.

It is certain that Methodist preaching was begun in New York by Philip Embury, and in Maryland by Robert Strawbridge. To those Wesleyan local preachers the honor of organizing the first societies in this country belongs without dispute. The question of the priority of the work of the one or the other is still debated, and will, no doubt, continue undetermined unless better authenticated dates respecting the origin of the society in Maryland than have heretofore been produced shall be brought to light.

The evidence which has been relied upon to show that Strawbridge preached in Maryland before Embury commenced preaching in New York is, in part, given by William Fort as follows:

"I am in possession of documents which date the conversion of John Evans in 1764. From those papers I learn, as well as from other sources, that Mr. Strawbridge lived on the farm now occupied by Mr. Jacob Keim, and that the neighbors were in the habit of going to plow his ground and sow his seed gratuitously while he was absent from home preaching the Gospel. On one of those occasions John Evans had a conversation with Mrs. Strawbridge on the subject of religion which resulted in his conversion. His house was then opened for preaching, and so continued for more than forty years. As early as 1762 or 1763 Strawbridge was not only preaching, but baptizing, in Frederick County. He had an appointment regularly at John Maynard's, who was then a Methodist; and at one of those appointments, in 1762 or 1763, he baptized Henry Maynard, who died in 1837. Tradition says that Strawbridge was ordained by a German minister, in all probability by Mr. Benedict Swoope, who then resided in that region." *

If the dates given by Mr. Fort can be authenticated by indisputable documentary authority, then it will appear that Robert Strawbridge, and not Philip Embury, was the founder of Methodism in the United States. Unfortunately Mr. Fort, who published the above statement forty years ago, failed to exhibit the character and authenticity of the documents upon which he professed to base his claim of the priority of the work of Strawbridge.

It is remarkable that the early preachers, and especially Asbury, did not sufficiently appreciate the historical importance of the question whether or not Embury or Strawbridge began the Methodist movement in America as to

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," July 10, 1844.

leave it settled beyond doubt. How easily might the Rev. William Colbert have determined it by the testimony of Mrs. Strawbridge! In the early part of 1792 Mr. Colbert was traveling Harford Circuit, Maryland, and on the 24th of February, of that year, he wrote the following in his Journal:

"Visited Sister Strawbridge, the widow of one of the first Methodist preachers that appeared in America." Mrs. Strawbridge could doubtless have given Colbert the year of her husband's arrival in Maryland, and one line in his Journal would have preserved the date.

As the case stands, New York will continue to claim precedence as to time. Should Maryland fully establish the dates which she claims, she will stand forth as the earliest field of American Methodism as she is of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The society formed by Mr. Embury in New York was the means of calling Mr. Wesley's attention to the need of laborers in America, and he sent hither, in response to earnest appeals from that city, two missionaries in 1769. These were Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor. Mr. Wesley also sent with them to the New York society fifty pounds sterling.

In the year 1771 Francis Asbury and Richard Wright were appointed to re-enforce the work. Thomas Rankin and George Shadford followed in 1773. Two local preachers also came over who were useful in extending the cause and who became itinerant laborers. These were Robert Williams and John King. The latter introduced Methodism in Baltimore.

The local ministry were not only the founders of the Methodist movement in the land of its largest achievements, but they have been conspicuously useful throughout the history of the denomination in edifying the Church by their devoted labors, which were generally performed without pecuniary reward. The practical and sagacious Asbury,

in the days of the severe struggles of the young Church, appreciated the usefulness and felt the necessity of maintaining the local ministry. "He would earnestly and emphatically say in the Annual Conferences that they were the body-guards of the cause." *

Thomas Bell, a Methodist mechanic from England, was in New York in 1769, and in a letter to an English friend, dated May 1, of that year, he gives the following picture of Methodism in that city. He says: "When I came to New York I found that our business was not very plentiful for strangers. Though there is a good deal of business in the town, it is entirely overstocked with trades-people; but what added most to my satisfaction was, I found a few of the dear people of God in it. There is one Mr. Emmery, [Embury,] one of our preachers that came from Ireland nine years ago. Lately there were two that came from Dublin. They have met together and their number has increased, and they have built a large new house, costing them £600 sterling. They are very poor in this world. They expect assistance from England, but I often used to tell them they need not; for many of the people of England were very poor themselves; and they that had this world's goods did not care to part with them. There is another of our preachers who was a captain in the army. He was convinced of the truth before he left England. His name is Webb. God has been pleased to open his mouth. So the Lord carries on a very great work by these two men. They were, however, sore put to it in building their house. They made several collections about the town for it. They went to Philadelphia and got part of the money there. I wrought upon it six days." †

There are mistakes in some of the earlier historical works of the denomination respecting the identity and history of two of its chief founders in the city of New York.

* "Wesleyan Repository," vol. ii, pp. 317, 318.

† "Arminian Magazine," 1807, pp. 45, 46.

A statement corrective of this important passage in American Methodist history is kindly furnished by Bishop Merrill, at the request of the author of this volume, and is here inserted as an important contribution to the historical literature of the Church. Bishop Merrill says:

The true account of the honored persons instrumental in planting Methodism in New York has not yet appeared in any history of Methodism in this country. It is not strange that the traditions respecting these should become in a measure obscure with the lapse of years, and finally uncertain and contradictory. Such, indeed, has been the case with the accounts given of the "mother of American Methodism," Mrs. Barbara Heck. The popular impression has been that she was a widow at the time she made her famous appeal to Mr. Embury, and stirred him up to duty, and displayed such commendable zeal in gathering the congregation for the first Methodist sermon in New York. This impression, however, is erroneous, and has led to numerous mistakes and misapprehensions in regard to persons, names, and events in connection with these early transactions.

The author of that popular work, "Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism," the Rev. J. B. Wakeley, following the prevalent tradition, represented Paul Heck, who was one of the original Board of Trustees of the John Street society, as the son of Barbara Heck, and ascribes to him impossible actions, and a subsequent history and family relations to which he was a total stranger. He also very strangely follows the tradition which changes the family name into Hick, and describes the original Barbara as spending her life in obscurity and poverty in the city of New York, where he supposes she ultimately died and was buried. His language is, "Mrs. Hick died many years ago in the triumphs of our holy religion, and was buried in Trinity Church-yard

in New York." It need not be doubted that some one whose name was Mrs. Hick—and for all we know it might have been Barbara Hick—thus lived and died in New York, and was buried in Trinity Church-yard; but that the Mrs. Barbara Heck, who is so justly styled the "mother of American Methodism," spent her life in New York, and died and was buried there, is not true in any particular. In other words, Mrs. Barbara Heck was not a widow at the period in question; Paul Heck, the original trustee, was not her son, but her lawful husband; she did not live and die in New York, and was not buried in Trinity Church-yard; and her family name was never any thing other than Heck.

That persons of such eminent worth and so intimately related to the beginning of Methodism in this country should drop into obscurity, so that their real history has been lost to the Church, has long been a mystery, and the occasion of no little speculation; but, fortunately, the facts have come into the writer's possession from trustworthy sources, and are now for the first time given to the public in this permanent form.

Paul Heck, and Barbara, his wife, came to this country from Ireland about 1760. Having been subjects of the British government in the old country, before and after their conversion, and having come to New York under the protection of the British flag, they were in heart loyal to God and their king; and when the Revolutionary War began, and its turbulent waves dashed about the city of their adoption, they quietly retired, as did Embury, and some others of the original class, and settled at Salem, in the State of New York, and formed the first Methodist society in that section. Mr. Paul Heck, the husband of Barbara, entered the British army under Burgoyne, whether by constraint or willingly we know not, nor does it matter, as the fact is all that concerns us. At the time that General Burgoyne's army was surrendered to the Ameri-

cans, Mr. Heck was at home on furlough, visiting his family, when his presence was discovered by some patriot soldiers, who arrested him, and started to convey him to General Washington's camp as a prisoner of war. On their way they stopped at night in an unoccupied farm-house, where they wrapped themselves in their blankets and went to sleep on the floor, with their prisoner between them. Mr. Heck did not sleep as soundly as did his captors, but got up in the night without disturbing them, and left the house and went into the woods. Of course he did not return to his home, and he could not rejoin his regiment, now prisoners of war, and so he made his way into Canada, which was the most natural thing for him to do under the circumstances. In the meantime Philip Embury, who had removed from New York city with the Hecks, had died, and his widow was married to a Mr. Lawrence, of the same Methodist society. As soon as practicable Mr. Heck sent for his family, and his wife and children, with the Lawrences, and some others of the first Methodists, went into Canada and settled at Augusta, where again they formed a Methodist class, so that these same persons originated Methodism in three different centers.

This statement I took from the lips of John Heck, Esq., now living in Lockport, Illinois, who is the grandson of Paul and Barbara Heck, and the only living person who was present and witnessed the death and burial of his grandmother, the veritable Christian woman, who, under God, was the mother of Methodism on this continent. The gentleman who gives this testimony, John Heck, the grandson of Paul and Barbara Heck, is now [November, 1884] living at Lockport, Illinois. He is a well-preserved gentleman, beyond fourscore, intelligent, upright, and highly esteemed; he is a communicant in the Protestant Episcopal Church, though a warm friend to the Methodists, and is in every respect worthy of the utmost confidence. He remembers distinctly his grandmother's death,

was present when she died, saw her buried, and grew to manhood in the vicinity of her grave. The proofs in his possession of the correctness of his statements are entirely satisfactory, although nothing beyond his word would be required by any one who knows him. I have had the pleasure of being a guest in his elegant home, and have been much interested in the details of the family history of his grandparents, while enjoying his hospitality. Paul Heck died at Augusta, Canada, toward the close of the last century, a Methodist and Christian as long as he lived, and respected and honored in the community where he lived, died, and was buried. His wife, Barbara, survived him several years, and died A.D. 1804, and was buried by the side of her husband, and there their graves remain unto this day.

That the tradition given in the "Lost Chapters" is incorrect, will appear plain to every one upon the slightest investigation. Mr. Wakeley tells us, truly enough, that Paul Heck (not Hick, as he writes it) was one of the original trustees of the John Street Methodist society as early as 1768. In proof of this he gives a copy of the original lease of ground from Mary Barclay, and the executors of the estate of her husband, to the trustees of said society, and the name of Paul Heck is in the list of that Board of Trustees. He is also shown to have been an active member of the Board, superintending the work on the preaching-house, negotiating for the ground, receipting for material for the building, and contributing to the funds. The fac-simile of his handwriting is given, showing him to have been experienced with the pen; so that, as early as 1768, he must have been a man of mature age and judgment, occupying a position of trust which required skill and experience. But, according to Mr. Wakeley's position and statements, he was at that time a youth of sixteen!

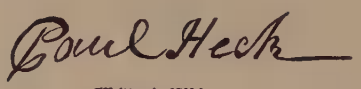
Mr. Wakeley makes the statement that he was the *son of*

Barbara Heck; that he was "appointed a class-leader soon after the Revolutionary War;" that "for nearly thirty years he filled the office of a trustee in the Methodist Episcopal Church;" and adds that he "filled both these offices to the day of his death." He furthermore tells us that "he died March 16, 1825, aged seventy-three years." Now look at this: He was a trustee nearly thirty years, and held that office to the day of his death. But thirty years backward from March 16, 1825, the day of his death, would not reach back to 1778, but only to 1795, leaving a gap of twenty-seven years! Again, as above remarked, if he was trustee, as Mr. Wakeley proves, in 1778, and died March 16, 1825, as Mr. Wakeley asserts, and had been a member of the Methodist society fifty-five years, as Mr. Wakeley also states, then he was a trustee of the Methodist society two years before he was a Methodist. He must have been a remarkable youth to have been an active trustee, contributing three pounds and ten shillings to the preaching-house, and doing so much for the cause, before he was a Methodist, and at the age of sixteen! The absurdity of all this is apparent at first glance.

The truth is, Mr. Wakeley has confounded two men of the same name, and ascribes to one the deeds of the other. In the list of subscribers to the original building fund, as given in the "Lost Chapters," there appears the name of Jacob Heck, contributing one pound. This Jacob was a distant relative to Paul Heck, and came from the same place in the old country, and settled in New York about the time that Mr. Embury began preaching. It is not at all impossible that his wife's name was Barbara, although on this point we have no evidence, and he, no doubt, had a son, Paul, a lad of fourteen when Methodist preaching was established in 1766. This young Paul, who was neither the husband nor son of the original Barbara Heck, was probably converted in 1770, and subsequently married Han-

nah Dean, and filled the offices of class-leader and trustee till the day of his death, March 16, 1825.

In regard to the mooted question as to whether the name of the founders of Methodism should be Heck or Hick, I only deem it important to direct attention to the fac-simile of Mr. Heck's signature, as given several times, with unvarying accuracy, in the "Lost Chapters," (written in 1769, as follows :)



(Written in 1769.)

In a foot-note, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Dr. Bangs refers to Mrs. Barbara Heck in these words: "The name of this pious woman was *Hick*, the mother of the late *Paul Hick*, who became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in his youth, and was subsequently a class-leader and trustee, in which offices he continued to near the close of his life, and finally died in the triumphs of faith in the seventy-fourth year of his age." This Mr. Hick was the same mentioned by Mr. Wakeley, but was not, and could not have been, the original Paul Heck, who was trustee in 1768. In this particular both these authors were strangely misled, and gave utterance to the absurdity of making a lad of sixteen one of the most important officials and active agents in founding Methodism in New York, and that, too, before he was himself a Methodist.

CENTENNIAL HISTORY

OF

AMERICAN METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE.

IN a plain meeting-house in Lovely Lane, in Baltimore, there assembled on the day before Christmas, in the year 1784, a unique company of men. They were plainly attired, and most of them bore the marks of service and exposure. They were mostly young men—but few, indeed, had reached middle life.

At the call of heralds, one of whom rode over twelve hundred miles in about six weeks to summon them together, they had come on horse and saddle-bags from the Middle States, and from a portion of the South. Most of them had traveled far, and had spent days in making the journey, amid the blasts of late December.

Few of them could be called polished or cultured men. They were, however, men of thought and men of purpose. They were marked by a serene dignity of mien and calm earnestness of spirit. They were eminently men of action. They had entered into a Christian movement, called Methodism, which about twenty years before appeared in feebleness and obscurity on this continent. Through that movement they learned the way of salvation by faith, and were led into the experience of sins forgiven. By that

movement they were thrust forth as wandering preachers of the great salvation. To that movement they had devoted themselves by holy vows; and in the face of derision, toil, and danger, they had gone forth, like the Master they served, homeless, and without where to lay their heads. One of them* had written to Mr. Wesley a few months before: "The present preachers suffer much; being often obliged to dwell in dirty cabins, to sleep in poor beds, and for retirement to go into the woods. But we must suffer with, if we labor for, the poor." Some of them, like Paul and Silas, had suffered imprisonment and stripes for the sake of the Gospel. Their chief leader was Francis Asbury, who as he met hardship, and at times almost starvation in his laborious travels, exclaimed:

> "In hope of that immortal crown,
> I now the cross sustain;
> And gladly wander up and down,
> And smile at toil and pain."

And they were all like-minded. Asbury, in those words of Charles Wesley, expressed their, as well as his, feeling.

Now they were assembled in Baltimore, a band of heroes as true and noble as ever toiled for God and man. One who was there says, "There were in that assembly a goodly number of very wise men, for lo, they had turned many, very many, to righteousness."† Another who was present says: "Perhaps such a number of holy, zealous, godly men never met together in Maryland before."‡ Dr. Coke, who was there as the embassador of the father of the Methodist family, bore a letter from Mr. Wesley, which set forth that inasmuch as the American provinces had been totally disjoined from the British Empire, and become independent States, and as there

* Asbury, in letter dated March 20, 1784, and published in "Arminian Magazine," 1786.

† The Rev. T. Ware, in "Methodist Quarterly Review," vol. xiv.

‡ William Black, "Arminian Magazine," 1791, p. 411.

were no Bishops in America, and but few clergymen of the Church of England; and as therefore the holy sacraments could not be administered to the extent required by the societies, he did not scruple to appoint Dr. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents of the Methodists in America.

In that humble meeting-house, which was without a stove, and the seats in which were without backs, until, in the language of Dr. Coke, the "friends in Baltimore were so kind as to put up a large stove and to back several of the seats," for their comfort, that remarkable company of men sat in Conference, under the presidency of Coke and Asbury, to receive and act upon the communications made to them by Mr. Wesley through his chosen representative.

The overture of Mr. Wesley was heard by the Conference in Lovely Lane with gladness. The members congratulated each other upon the welcome intelligence conveyed to them by Dr. Coke. The most reliable historical documents indicate that on the day that they assembled they adopted a resolution to organize a Church. The discussion of that resolution was, therefore, brief. The need of better order than the societies had previously enjoyed was strongly felt. Again and again had Mr. Wesley been addressed on the subject of the necessity of an ordained clergy to administer the sacraments. Asbury says, "Mr. Wesley was called for near twelve or thirteen years repeatedly, to do something for his people in America."* Wesley was a loyal churchman, and therefore was slow to subvert the order of the Church. Consequently the American Methodists became discontented. They could not appreciate the reasons assigned why the men whose ministry had led them to Christ should be forbidden to administer to them Christ's ordinances. In Virginia the Conference proceeded to solve the difficulty by appointing a committee who ordained one another, and then

* Bishop Asbury's Valedictory Address.

administered the sacraments. This course was strongly opposed by Asbury, who was a decided Episcopalian. With him agreed most of the Northern preachers. A rupture was threatened. Mediators were sent to the Southern Conference to see if the division could be averted. At first the mission promised no good results. At last brotherly love and forbearance triumphed amid prayers and tears, and the Virginia preachers consented to suspend the sacraments for a year, taking measures to have their cause placed before Mr. Wesley meanwhile.*

The case was, indeed, momentous. Most of the Episcopal clergy, to which Church many of the Methodists considered themselves as belonging, were destitute of personal godliness. Some of them were charged to their face by one of their number, who was devout, with the use of cards, dice, etc., and with allowing laymen to swear, unrebuked, in their presence. Intoxication was not rare among them, and one of them is described as being carried after dinner to his gig by servants and there tied to prevent him from falling out, while a servant conducted him to his home in a state of drunkenness.† The Rev. Devereux Jarratt, a zealous clergyman of the Church of England, in writing to Mr. Wesley, in 1773, said concerning the clergy in Virginia: "We have ninety-five parishes in the colony, and all except one, I believe, are supplied with clergymen. But, alas! you will understand the rest. I know of but one clergyman of the Church of England who appears to have the power and spirit of vital religion. All seek their own, and not the things that are Christ's. Is not our situation then truly deplorable?"‡ It is not strange that a band of men and women who were in deep earnest about their souls' salvation should object to being denied the

* The embassy to the Southern Conference consisted of Asbury, Watters, and Garrettson.

† Bennett's "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia."

‡ "Arminian Magazine," 1786, p. 397.

sacraments of Christ, except they received them from uncleansed hands.

The clergy of the Church of England were loyalists, and most of them left the country during the war of the Revolution. Consequently the Methodists, and especially those in the South, could not in many instances reach an ordained minister except by traveling afar; and if found, he was likely to be such as a Christian of tender conscience and strict fidelity would shrink from approaching at the altar.

The difficulty concerning the sacraments, and the division of action resulting therefrom, was so grave, that the escape of the Methodist societies from a disastrous rupture seemed only due to providential interposition. Asbury thought that twenty preachers and three thousand people would have been involved in the disaster had it happened; "but," he said, "the Lord would not suffer this." Dromgoole, who joined the embassy from the North in their effort to restore harmony, wrote to Wesley some time subsequently: "The Lord has effectually healed our divisions, and we are now more firmly united than ever." Yet Thomas Ware records his opinion that the influence of Asbury, great as it was, could not much longer have restrained the preachers from administering the sacraments.

With all these facts fresh in their memories, it is not strange that the members of the Christmas Conference hailed with joy the letter of Mr. Wesley, which contained his plan for giving them the sacraments, and at the same time two superintendents. It was promptly "read, analyzed, and cordially approved." * Neither is it strange that so quickly, and with perfect unanimity, the Conference proceeded to take such important action. The decision of the preachers was in a spirit befitting their sublime vocation. There was no jealousy, no strife. Companions in heroic labor, seeking nothing but the glory of God and

* The Rev. T. Ware, in "Methodist Quarterly Review," vol. xiv, 1832.

the welfare of his kingdom, their deliberations were conducted in the sweetness of love. One of their number says that throughout the session not an unkind word was spoken either in public or private, neither was "an unbrotherly emotion felt; Christian love predominated, and under its influence we kindly thought and sweetly spoke the same." With entire unanimity they gave the name Methodist Episcopal to the Church they founded.

According to the recollection of that occasion retained to advanced age by Thomas Ware, the preacher who suggested the name of the Church was John Dickins, an Englishman by birth, and probably the ablest man upon the floor of the Conference. He was also the first to learn from Coke after his arrival the nature of his mission, and he was the near friend of Asbury. Ware, whose recollections furnish some of the most important *data* for a correct view of that great Conference, informs us that "Dr. Coke was in favor of taking the name Methodist Episcopal Church," and "argued that the plan of General Superintendency was in fact a species of episcopacy."* Asbury, as the action in the Conference of his friend Dickins would suggest, was doubtless in accord with Coke as to the name of the Church, and it is not strange, therefore, that Coke's speech in favor of that name should have controlled the decision of the preachers, whose inexperience would lead them to defer to the opinions of those who surpassed them as much in knowledge as in years. Besides, Coke, no doubt, spoke persuasively, for Ware, nearly half a century subsequently, said of him: "He was the best speaker on a Conference floor I ever heard."

Francis Asbury declined the appointment of superintendent from Wesley, but he expressed a willingness to accept it from his brethren of the ministry. For over thirteen years he had been in this country and had traveled

* Letter of Thomas Ware, December, 1828, published in "Defense of Truth," Baltimore, 1829.

and labored like an apostle. When he came to America the societies were but few, and not half a score of houses of worship did the Methodists possess on the continent. When, nearly two years after his arrival, the first Conference was held, only one thousand one hundred and sixty members were reported. With that feeble and obscure band, scattered from New York to Virginia, he fully allied himself. When the storm of the Revolution burst upon the country he stood firmly at his post, notwithstanding every other preacher who came from England fled. Some of them found it necessary to go because of their utterances respecting the war. Wesley himself expressed opinions on that subject which, while they showed his loyalty to the government of which he was a subject, seriously embarrassed his laborers here. This Asbury regretted, saying, that he was "truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped into the politics of America." He shows the effect of Mr. Wesley's attitude with respect to the war by the further statement that "some inconsiderate persons have taken occasion to censure the Methodists in America on account of Mr. Wesley's political sentiments." Mr. Drew, in his "Life of Dr. Coke," says that Wesley "very warmly espoused the cause of England, and reprobated the conduct of the colonies."

It is not singular that the preachers sent by Mr. Wesley to this country should have followed the example of their chief. By doing so they encountered both difficulty and peril. One of them, and he the first in authority under Wesley, namely, Thomas Rankin, fled from his post in September, 1777, and entered within the lines of the British. After reaching Philadelphia, which was in their possession, he declared from the pulpit his belief "that God would not revive his work in America until they submitted to their rightful sovereign, George III." * Rankin had previously been very positive that the Americans should be imme-

* Ware, in "Methodist Quarterly Review," vol. xiv, 1832.

diately reduced to subjection to the English government. He sought to get the British preachers away to England. "It appeared to me," says Asbury, "that his object was to sweep the continent of every preacher that Mr. Wesley sent to it, and of every respectable traveling preacher from Europe who had graduated among us, whether English or Irish. He told us that if we returned to our native country, we should be esteemed as such obedient, loyal subjects, that we should obtain ordination in the grand Episcopal Church of England, and come back to America with high respectability after the war was ended." Asbury, however, was not seduced away by such fanciful views. He was true to America as well as to American Methodism. He says, "Abundance of respectable members said, 'Will you leave us? Will you leave us?'" He adds, however, that "it was the general language of the American people and preachers, that those preachers from Europe who were dissatisfied with the measures of the country had better go home."*

Martin Rodda, another preacher from England, published the king's proclamation over his circuit, and only by fleeing to the British fleet in the Chesapeake did he escape from death.† Such conduct caused persecution to break forth upon the Methodists. Several of the native preachers were imprisoned. Asbury, as an Englishman, was specially obnoxious to suspicion. He found it necessary to go into retirement, and accepted a retreat from turbulence and danger in the home of Judge Thomas White, in Delaware. Neither turbulence, nor filial affection,‡ nor peril could induce him to desert what he believed was his divinely appointed field of labor. Amidst the tumult he exclaimed: "Three thousand miles from home—my friends have left me—I am considered by some as an enemy of the country

* Asbury's letter to the Rev. Joseph Benson.

† "Life of Garrettson," p. 65.

‡ Asbury was the only surviving child of his parents, who were then living in England.

—every day liable to be seized by violence and abused; however, all this is but a trifle to suffer for Christ and the salvation of souls." Thus unmoved and undaunted Asbury maintained his apostolate in the new world.

Now he was bound by ties formed of sacrifice and suffering to the young Church. To it he gladly gave his all. He, however, was unwilling to preside over it as chief pastor under the authority and by the appointment of a man who dwelt beyond the sea, and who might, at his pleasure, recall him to England. His brethren well knew his worth, and his capacity to serve them as their leader. One of them, who was a member of this historic Conference, more than a year previously had written to Mr. Wesley: "The preachers at present are united to Mr. Asbury, and esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake, and earnestly desire his continuance on the continent during his natural life; and to act as he does at present, to wit, to superintend the whole work and go through all the circuits once a year. He is now well acquainted with the country, with the preachers, and people, and has a large share in the affections of both; therefore they would not willingly part with him." * In selecting him for superintendent it is evident that Wesley knew that Asbury was the choice of the preachers in America for that responsible service. Accordingly, by the unanimous voice of the Conference, he was placed at the head of the itinerant ranks. On the twenty-seventh day of December, 1784, he was formally set apart by the imposition of the hands of Coke, Vasey, Whatcoat, and Otterbein, as General Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Coke preached on that impressive occasion, and he says, "The Lord, I think, was peculiarly present." Dr. Coke's appointment by Wesley to the same office was unanimously ratified.

The Conference recognized two orders in the ministry,

* Edward Dromgoole, letter to Wesley, May 24, 1783, "Arminian Magazine," 1791.

namely, Deacon and Elder, or Presbyter, and Asbury was invested with both orders before his consecration to the office of Superintendent. Sixteen preachers were elected to orders, four of whom, being absent, were subsequently ordained. Doctrinal symbols and a liturgy, furnished by Wesley, were also accepted and adopted.

Thus was organized the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the humble meeting-house in Lovely Lane, Baltimore, that body of holy men, scarcely exceeding half a hundred, laid in obscurity the foundations of a temple that has since covered the land, and whose walls are yet rising in the ends of the earth.

During the session of the Conference Dr. Coke preached at noon each day, except on the ordination days, and the Sundays, when the preaching hour was ten o'clock, and the service generally lasted four hours. There was a sermon by one of the preachers at six every morning. At six in the evening there was preaching at the "Point," at Otterbein's church, and in Lovely Lane.

Who were the men who composed the Christmas Conference? Great as was the work they did, sublimely beautiful as was the way they did it, there is no full record of their names. No complete journal of that first and greatest General Conference of American Methodism has been transmitted to us. The men who composed the Conference went from near and far to Baltimore, and performed the great task that was given to them at that Christmas-tide, and then, careless about any luster being shed upon their names by what they had achieved, they returned to their arduous toils, content with the record they had made for Christ. The Christianity of the nineteenth century, especially in America, has been largely affected, and even shaped, by what those men of God did at that Conference, and their assembly will, in all ages, be contemplated as one of the momentous crisal points in the history of the Christian Church; yet the world knows not,

and will never know, all the names of the men whose work at that Christmas Conference is invested with such vast moral grandeur.

When the Conference concluded its work, a new ecclesiastical structure was reared. Previously, the American Methodists were a "people of God," yet, in a churchly sense, they were not "a people." Asbury, in his valedictory address, says it was in pleasantry said, "We were a Church and no Church." They were societies, subject to the government of Mr. Wesley. Their preachers were laymen, who, by the authority of Wesley, performed only certain functions of the Christian ministry. Hence the title of "lay preachers."

Now the feeble and scattered bands of Methodists in America were joined together in an organization called the Methodist Episcopal Church, which possessed a creed, canons, liturgy, and clergy. It also had superintendents, who soon applied to themselves the more imposing title of Bishop.* The traveling system of preaching, called the itinerancy, which had distinguished Methodism from the beginning, was also retained.

The new organization was accepted by the Christian world as a Church of Christ. It was composed of a body of faithful men. It accepted and administered the sacraments of Christ. It received the essential and ancient doctrinal tenets of Christendom, as embodied in an abridgment of the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church. Its hymns and its liturgy, the latter being the Prayer Book of the Church of England, somewhat abridged, embodied the faith once delivered to the saints. That it was a Church, therefore, in every thing essential to constitute a Christian Church, none but those who strenuously insist upon prelacy could deny.

It is true, that in the organization of the Church the laity had no direct voice. It may be said, however, that

*Lee's "History of the Methodists," p. 128.

the men, by whom the Church was organized, were themselves laymen, who, without ordination, acted as preachers. Asbury himself, the chief of the small preaching band, was, in an ecclesiastical sense, only a layman. Coke was the only regularly ordained minister who participated in the organization of the Church. His orders, like Wesley's, were received from the Church of England. Thomas Vasey and Richard Whatcoat, who were at the Conference, had been ordained by Wesley; yet none would claim that their ordination was regular, according to the canons of the English Church. Wesley, as a clergyman of the Church of England, only claimed that he had received his "power" to thus ordain from "the Great Shepherd and Bishop of the Church." Consequently, up to the time of their ordination at the Christmas Conference, all the American preachers, Asbury included, were, as we have said, simply laymen who preached the Gospel.

Notwithstanding, it must be allowed that the men who composed the body that erected the Methodist societies into a Church, were, in the common acceptation of the term, "preachers;" and that the "laity," as such, had no formal representation. It must, however, be remembered that the societies and preachers had been subject to Mr. Wesley, and that Dr. Coke and his associates, Whatcoat and Vasey, came hither by Wesley's authority. Wesley would not, and never did, tolerate the laity in his governing councils. In a letter bearing the date of January 13, 1790, but little more than a year before his death, he wrote these emphatic words: "As long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards, or leaders, among the Methodists. We have not, and never had, any such custom. We are no republicans, and never intend to be."* It could not be supposed, therefore, that Coke would have suggested or sanctioned any representation of the members of the societies in a Conference to which he bore messages and

*Dr. Jennings's "Exposition," p. 92.

authority from the founder of Methodism. Asbury, who had long labored in America by Wesley's appointment, was, no doubt, in this particular in harmony with his chief. The American preachers, there is reason to think, believed that the system of itinerancy and lay representation were incompatible. Indeed, one of the members of that Conference, the Rev. Thomas Ware, has left recorded the opinion, that had the people required representation, and secured it, they would thereby have incurred the grave responsibility of destroying the itinerant preaching system. He further says, respecting the absence of the laity from that Conference, "We knew, and our people knew, that we were dependent on them for our bread, and that they could wield this check over us when they pleased. Such was our talk among ourselves, and among the most intelligent of our people. We assumed nothing; made no new terms of communion, save one on slavery." *

The belief which was long prevalent, that the unique ministerial system of Methodism would be shattered by the admission of the laity into its governing councils, may in part account for the fact that they had no representation in the General Conference which organized the Methodist Episcopal Church; as well as for the further fact, that the Conference made no provision for their subsequent recognition in the legislative assemblies of the Church.

One thing, however, should be known, namely, that, before the Christmas Conference, the laity were consulted respecting some of the matters which were there considered. Dr. Coke, as is shown by his Journal, published in the Philadelphia "Arminian Magazine" of the year 1789, counseled with the society in Philadelphia on the subject of the government by superintendents and an ordained clergy, before he met Mr. Asbury. On Sunday, November 7, 1784, Coke preached in Dr. M'Gaw's church, in Philadel-

* "Methodist Quarterly Review," vol. xiv, 1832, p. 99.

phia, and "in the evening," he says, "to a large congregation in our own chapel, on the necessity of the witness of the Spirit; after preaching I opened to the society our new plan of Church government, and I have reason to believe that they all rejoice in it." On December 2, 1784, Coke records a visit he made to the home of a Mr. Airey, who, he says, "was the grand supporter of the preachers in this country during the late contest." Of the views of Mr. Airey on the subject of his mission, Dr. Coke became informed, for he says, "He is a hearty supporter of the new plan." * These statements indicate that representative laymen were consulted, and expressed their opinions concerning the new departure, before the Conference assembled.

The members of the societies were prompt to ratify, by their approval, the work of the Conference. Leading authorities of the period assure us that the new Church organization was hailed by the laity, throughout the country, with a universal expression of satisfaction and pleasure. New York was heartily in favor of the new order. Coke says of the Church there: "We expected that this society would have made the greatest opposition to our plan, but, on the contrary, they have been most forward to promote it. They have already put up a reading-desk, and railed in a communion table." † The first traveling preacher of American birth says that the change accomplished by the construction of a separate Church, "gave great satisfaction through all our societies." ‡ The first historian of the Church affirms that the Methodists were "heartily united together in the new plan, which the Conference had adopted." § Bishop Asbury states that every heart leaped with joy, and "the members of society, and the congregations

* This statement and that about the approval of the "new plan" by the society in Philadelphia are omitted in the volume of Coke's Journals.

† This statement is not in the volume of Coke's Journals. It is in his Journal in the "Arminian Magazine," (American,) June, 1789.

‡ "Watters's Autobiography," p. 102.

§ Lee's "History of the Methodists," p. 107.

in America, embraced our Church form and order." * Thus the work done at Baltimore, by the Christmas Conference, in the last days of the year 1784, was rendered abiding and effective, by the cordial concurrence therein of the ministry and laity of American Methodism; and the strength of the foundation then laid is shown by the stability and grandeur of the superstructure.

* Asbury's Valedictory Address.

CHAPTER II.

WHO WERE MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE?

WHO composed the Christmas Conference of 1784? That question, as we have seen, cannot now be fully answered. Forty-five years ago it could have been answered more perfectly than is now possible, because a few of its members were then alive, and had clear recollections of their fellow-members. Many persons, now living, have conversed with those venerable patriarchs who lingered so long behind their comrades in the early battles of the Church. Had they been questioned concerning the preachers who were present at that Conference, they could have given names, which their lips, now turned to dust, will never disclose. It is probable that the last survivor of the grand company of Methodist preachers who constituted that General Conference—one of the most important ecclesiastical assemblies that has been convened since the apostolic age—was Jonathan Forrest, of Maryland, who lived almost fifty-nine years after he participated in the organization of the Church.

The author of this volume has sought to secure a reliable catalogue of the members of the Christmas Conference. The Church which they organized has achieved so much, and has grown to a magnitude so vast, that they are entitled to be known and to be had in everlasting remembrance.

Lednum, in his "Rise of Methodism in America," gives the names of twenty-one preachers, including Coke and Asbury, who, he says, were certainly at the Christmas Conference. He, however, gives no indication of the evidence that they were there. A matter of such historical impor-

tance would hardly be settled without question, by the unsupported assertion of any man, unless it were known that he was a member of the Conference, which Lednum was not. Dr. Stevens, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," accepts Lednum's list as it stands, without change, and without question. It is no slight tribute to the accuracy of Lednum that documentary evidence has been found of the presence at that Conference of twenty out of twenty-one of the preachers who he says were certainly there. The one in Lednum's list of whose presence at the Conference no evidence has been obtained is Francis Poythress, and there is evidence which warrants the presumption that he was there.

It is a singular fact, that neither Coke nor Asbury, in the volumes of their Journals, give any names of members of the Christmas Conference. The Journal of Dr. Coke, which was printed in Philadelphia in 1789, and published in the "Arminian Magazine" (American) of that year, contains statements which show that certain preachers were members of that Conference whose presence there would otherwise be in doubt. Why those statements were eliminated from the volume of "Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America," published in London in 1793, is probably not known. Other very important facts concerning that pregnant period in American Methodist history are given in the Journal of Coke's first visit to the United States, as published in the Philadelphia "Arminian Magazine," in 1789, which are not found in the volume of his Journals. The Journal in the Magazine was published four years before the Journals in the volume, and only a little more than four years after the organization of the Church. It is doubtful whether many volumes of the Magazine, which contains Coke's Journal, are now in existence, and those that are preserved have escaped the ravages of almost a century. To the preservation of the volume of 1789, we are indebted for the fo

lowing information, by Dr. Coke, concerning certain members of the Christmas Conference: "One elder was elected for Antigua, Jeremiah Lambert; two for Nova Scotia, Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell; and ten for the States, John Tunnell, John Haggerty, James O'Kelly, Le Roy Cole, William Gill, Nelson Reed, Henry Willis, Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey, and Beverly Allen. They also elected three deacons, John Dickins, Caleb Boyer, and Ignatius Pigman. Brothers Tunnell, Willis, and Allen, of the elected elders, were not present at the Conference; nor Brother Boyer, of the deacons."

Sixteen preachers are here named by Coke as having been elected to orders at and by the Christmas Conference. Of these, Tunnell, Willis, Allen, and Boyer, exactly one fourth of the whole, Coke says "were not present at the Conference." This statement is equivalent to a declaration that the others named were present. We are authorized, therefore, by the testimony of Dr. Coke, to include in the catalogue of the preachers who were at the Christmas Conference all whom he mentions as elders and deacons, except those whose absence he records.

A catalogue of the names, and the evidence by which it is known that each name is that of a preacher who was a member of the Christmas Conference of 1784, will now be given in alphabetical form:

ASBURY, FRANCIS.—In the Journal of Dr. Coke in the Magazine, there is a brief, but important, passage not found in the volume of "Extracts of the Journals of the Five Visits to America." It is in these words: "The Lord, I think, was peculiarly present while I was preaching my two pastoral sermons; the first when I ordained Brother Asbury a Bishop, the second when we ordained the elders." There is conclusive evidence in Asbury's Journal and elsewhere that he was present at the Christmas Conference.

BLACK, WILLIAM.—Mr. Black, in his Journal published

in the English "Arminian Magazine," in the volume of 1791, (p. 411,) says: "On Thursday, 23, I arrived at Baltimore; Friday, 24, our Conference began, and ended on January 1, 1785. Two preachers, Messrs. Garrettson and Cromwell, were appointed for Nova Scotia. They set off by way of New York, and I went, by water, to Hineah." These words of Black show that he was at the Christmas Conference. He had come from Nova Scotia to get laborers, and the preachers whom he names were sent to assist him in that field.

Boyer, Caleb.—The Rev. Thomas Ware, in his Autobiography, says: "Boyer was the Paul and Pigman the Apollos of the Methodist Connection at that time. When Whatcoat and Vasey heard them at the Christmas Conference they said they had not heard their equal in the British connection, except Wesley and Fletcher." This passage ought to determine the question of the membership of both Boyer and Pigman in the Conference of 1784. But Dr. Coke says Boyer was not present. Coke may have only intended to signify that he was not present at the time of the ordination; as it is in that connection he speaks of his absence; or Boyer might have been there but a short time without the knowledge of Coke, who was a stranger.

Cole, Le Roy.—The Rev. Henry Boehm says, in his Autobiography: "October 9, we rode to Winchester, capital of Clarke County, Kentucky, and were the guests of Le Roy Cole." Of Cole he says, among other things: "He was a member of the famous Christmas Conference, in Baltimore, where the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1784." Mr. Boehm further adds: "We remained two days at Le Roy Cole's." Thus it is plain that Mr. Boehm had opportunity to know the truth of what he affirmed concerning Mr. Cole's relation to the famous first General Conference of American Methodism. (See also Coke's statement on page 36 of this volume.)

COKE, THOMAS.—Dr. Coke's presence at the Christmas Conference is shown by a variety of decisive testimony. Were all other evidence lacking, the following title-page of the sermon preached by him on the occasion of the ordination of Francis Asbury as superintendent, would suffice: "Substance of a Sermon preached at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, December 27, 1784, at the Ordination of the Rev. Francis Asbury to the office of Superintendent. By Thomas Coke, LL.D., Superintendent of said Church. Published at the desire of the Conference." The sermon is inscribed by its author to the Rev. Francis Asbury, and the inscription is dated "Baltimore, March 1, 1785." In his Journal, as it appears in the Philadelphia "Arminian Magazine," Dr. Coke, under date of Baltimore, Feb. 26–March 6, 1785, says: "Here I have printed, according to the desire of the Conference, the substance of a sermon which I preached at the ordination of Brother Asbury to the office of a Bishop. It consists of two parts: 1st. A vindication of our conduct; 2d. The characteristics of a Christian Bishop." *

CROMWELL, JAMES O.—That Mr. Cromwell was present at the Christmas Conference is shown in the quotation from the Journal of Mr. Black under his name on the preceding page; also by the statement of Dr. Coke, on page 36 of this volume, respecting the elders of the Christmas Conference. Jesse Lee, in his "History of the Methodists," gives an account of the Christmas Conference, and says that "Mr. Garrettson and Mr. Cromwell were ordained for Nova Scotia, and were sent there immediately afterward."

DICKINS, JOHN.—That Mr. Dickins was a member of the General Conference of 1784 is attested by Thomas Ware, who (p. 106 of his Autobiography) says: "One proposed

* There is no mention of Asbury's ordination in the volume of Coke's Journals.

—I think it was John Dickins—that we should adopt the title of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The motion, on Mr. Dickins's suggestion, was carried, without, I think, a dissenting voice."

Dromgoole, Edward.—Mr. Dromgoole's presence at the Christmas Conference is shown by the testimony of the Rev. Alexander M'Caine, who was an eminent minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. M'Caine received a classical education, and in January, 1797, joined the American Methodist itinerancy. He early became acquainted with Mr. Dromgoole, and, on the second of February, 1830, he wrote of him and of their friendship, thus: "My old friend and brother, Edward Dromgoole, now, perhaps, the oldest Methodist and the oldest Methodist preacher in the United States. O how many happy moments have I spent in his house, and in his company, when I traveled the circuit in which he lives, in 1803." * Mr. Dromgoole lived upward of thirty years after the time to which M'Caine refers in the above reminiscence. Their intimacy gave Mr. M'Caine abundant opportunity to know from Mr. Dromgoole's lips that he was a member of the great historic Conference of American Methodism. The testimony of Mr. M'Caine would, therefore, establish that fact if there was no other evidence. There is other evidence, however. In 1829 M'Caine published a pamphlet, entitled "The Defense of the Truth." From that work, (pp. 80 and 81,) the following statement and letter are taken:

"To confirm what I have said, respecting the preachers who composed the Conference of 1784, not understanding or believing that the recommendation of the prayer book was a recommendation of the Episcopal form of Church government, I shall subjoin the testimony of a few of those *who were members of that Conference*, and who have survived their fellow-laborers of that day.

* "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," Baltimore, 1830, p. 142.

"Extract of a letter from Rev. Edward Dromgoole, dated Brunswick, 26 Sept., 1828:

"'I do not recollect that there was any proposition for our receiving the prayer book and the Episcopacy connected. And it is certain the preachers never considered themselves obliged to conform to the prayer book, for they did not make use of it on Wednesdays and Fridays, as recommended.

"'Yours very sincerely,

"'EDWARD DROMGOOLE, Sen.'"

ELLIS, IRA.—In Asbury's Journal (vol. iii, p. 180) is "A Sketch of the labors and travels of Ira Ellis," signed with his name. He there states that he was at the celebrated General Conference of 1784, as the following extract will show: "In the spring of 1784 I was stationed in Bertie Circuit. Six months I labored there; one quarter in Camden; and the last quarter, excepting the time spent *in attending the General Conference in Baltimore*, in Portsmouth Circuit." Lednum does not place Mr. Ellis in his list, but it is certain he was at the Conference of 1784.

ELLIS, REUBEN.—Mr. Ellis is one of the number who, according to Dr. Coke's statement, (see page 36,) was elected an elder at the Christmas Conference, and was present.

EVERETT, JOSEPH.—The fact that Mr. Everett was a member of the Conference which organized the Church is attested by himself. He published an autobiographical narrative in the American "Arminian Magazine" of the year 1790, and, among many other facts of his personal history, he there (p. 607) gives the following: "I was appointed at the next Conference to Fairfax Circuit, where I continued to labor till the Christmas Conference, when Dr. Coke came from England, and the Methodist Church separated from all connection or dependence on the Church of England or any other body or

society of people. From this Conference I was stationed in Berkley Circuit."

Forrest, Jonathan.—That Mr. Forrest was a member of the Christmas Conference, Mr. M'Caine, in his "Defense of the Truth," affirms. He also introduces into that work, in connection with the letter of Mr. Dromgoole, the following from Mr. Forrest: "As for what Mr. Emory has said respecting the recommendation of the prayer book, abridged by Mr. Wesley, being a recommendation of the Episcopal form of government for the American Methodist societies, I did not consider it in that light at the Conference of 1784. Nor have I considered it in that light at any time since, nor do I consider it in that light now. Nor do I believe it was so considered by any person in the Conference of 1784.

"Jonathan Forrest."

Garrettson, Freeborn.—In "The Experience and Travels of Mr. Freeborn Garrettson," Philadelphia, 1791, (p. 198,) he says: "It was concluded that I should go through the continent and call a Conference at Baltimore immediately. Within six weeks, after traveling upward of twelve hundred miles, I settled the business, besides preaching almost every day once, and sometimes twice, and made my return. The preachers being gathered, our Conference began on Christmas-day,* and *we acceded* to the method proposed by Mr. Wesley."

The Rev. Alexander M'Caine, who had a correspondence with Garrettson respecting the Christmas Conference, states that he was a member of it. Dr. Bangs's testimony is to the same effect.

In his semi-centennial sermon, preached before the New York Conference, at its session, May, 1826, Mr. Garrettson, speaking of the Christmas Conference, says: "From

* The definite testimony of Asbury, Coke, Whatcoat, and Black fixes the date of the Conference December 24, 1784.

this Conference my lot was cast in Nova Scotia. I landed in Halifax, accompanied by James O. Cromwell."

GILL, WILLIAM.—The evidence that Mr. Gill was a member of the Christmas Conference is contained in the quotation from Dr. Coke's Journal, on page 36 of this volume.

GLENDENNING, WILLIAM.—Mr. Glendenning wrote a book, entitled "The Life of William Glendenning," which was published in Philadelphia in 1795. The Rev. Jesse Lee quotes from it thus: "He says, in pages 11 and 12: 'In 1784 I traveled in Brunswick, in the State of Virginia, where my mind got more and more darkened and I lost my sense of a reconciled God, and all spiritual comforts departed from me.' Page 13, *at the Christmas Conference* this year, 'They wanted me to go as a missionary to Nova Scotia, which I refused with warmth.' However, he was proposed for the elder's office, and he says, (p. 14,) 'I was rejected from the eldership. The reason assigned was that I wanted gifts.'" *

GREEN, LEMUEL.—The Rev. Alexander M'Caine exercised his ministry in Philadelphia when Mr. Green was a resident of that city. Mr. M'Caine entered into the controversy which led to the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church. In the course of that controversy he wrote a pamphlet, which was published in 1827, in which he discussed some of the acts of the Christmas Conference. The pamphlet bore the title of "The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy." In it is a letter which M'Caine says he sent to several ministers whom he names, all of whom he affirms were members of the Conference of 1784. Mr. Green was one of those ministers. As he was then living in Philadelphia, and Mr. M'Caine was, no doubt, personally and well acquainted with him, the publication of his name by M'Caine, as one of the surviving members of the Christmas Conference, is proof that he was there. Besides, Dr. Emory, afterward Bishop, an-

* Lee's "History of the Methodists."

swered M'Caine's pamphlet by writing "The Defense of our Fathers." M'Caine wrote a rejoinder to that work, entitled "The Defense of the Truth," which Emory also answered; but in none of these writings was the statement by M'Caine, that Mr. Green was a member of the Conference of 1784 called in question. The fact that Mr. Green was a member of that Conference is stated on page 76 of the "History and Mystery."

Haggerty, John.—In a memoir of Mr. Haggerty, printed in the "Methodist Magazine" of 1824, which memoir was written by the Rev. Joshua Soule, who was soon after elected Bishop, it is said that Mr. Haggerty's appointment was Frederick in 1784, and also, "At the Conference of this year the preachers declared themselves an independent Church, and ordained Mr. Asbury Superintendent, and John Haggerty, Nelson Reed, and several others, Elders." Mr. Soule adds that he "had the pleasure of Mr. Haggerty's acquaintance for many years during his life-time, and was favored to be with him in his dying hours." In a tribute to Haggerty in Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit," Mr. Soule says that he perused Mr. Haggerty's Journal after his decease. It is evident, therefore, that he spoke from authority in whatever statements he made concerning John Haggerty. Mr. Haggerty's presence at the Christmas Conference is also shown by Coke's statement, quoted on page 36.

Ivey, Richard.—Mr. Ivey is placed by Dr. Coke in the number of elders who were at the Christmas Conference. (See the statement from Dr. Coke's Journal on page 36.)

Lambert, Jeremiah.—Mr. Asbury, in his Journals, says that at the Christmas Conference one elder was ordained for Antigua. The Rev. Jesse Lee, in his "History of the Methodists," says: "Mr. Lambert was ordained for Antigua, in the West Indies." (See also Coke's statement, page 36.)

O'KELLY, JAMES. — Mr. O'Kelly, as we shall hereafter see, left the Methodist Episcopal Church, and wrote against its government. In noticing some statements of O'Kelly about the Christmas Conference, the Rev. Jesse Lee addressed him thus: "I was not at that Conference, not hearing of it in time; but as you were ordained at that time, you returned quite satisfied, and defended the proceedings of the Conference." * This shows that Mr. O'Kelly was there. (See also Coke's statement, page 36.)

PHŒBUS, WILLIAM.—Myles, in his "Chronological History of the people called Methodists," says: "William Phœbus, one of the preachers in America, wrote an apology for the right of ordination in the Evangelical Church of America, called Methodists." Myles then gives extracts from Phœbus's work, in which he speaks of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Phœbus refers to Coke's ordination by Wesley, and says: "Him [Coke] he [Wesley] ordained his apostle or messenger to us, with outlines of advice for us to adopt, as we saw most conducive to the general good, recommending to us the New Testament for our pattern. Then with his power and the fear of God *we assembled at the city of Baltimore*, in the State of Maryland, and received Thomas Coke, LL.D., with his testimonials from the greatest man, to *us*, in the world." Dr. Bangs, in his "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," says that Phœbus, "in 1784, attended the Christmas Conference." As Phœbus lived many years in New York, and as Dr. Bangs must have known him well, the statement of the latter, if unsupported by any words of Phoebus, would be regarded as establishing the fact of his presence at that Conference.

PIGMAN, IGNATIUS.—Dr. Coke states that three deacons were elected at the Christmas Conference, of whom he says

* "Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee," by Le Roy M. Lee, D.D., p. 278.

Mr. Pigman was one. He states also that Mr. Boyer, who was elected deacon, was not at the Conference. Had Pigman not been present, it is taken for granted that Coke would have noted his absence, as he did the absence of Boyer. (See Coke's statement on page 36.) As Mr. Ware speaks of the presence of Boyer and Pigman at the Conference, (see page 37 of this volume,) we suppose both were there a portion of the session, though Boyer's presence was unobserved perhaps by Coke.

Poythress, Francis.—As Mr. Poythress, of the twenty-one named by Lednum, is the only one whose presence at the great Conference of 1784 we have not verified, we accept the proven accuracy of Lednum as authority in this case. Poythress was in the neighborhood, for Asbury, in Maryland, November 23, 1784, says: "Brother Poythress and myself had much talk about the new plan."

Reed, Nelson.—The statement of Bishop Soule, quoted under the name of John Haggerty, (p. 43,) that Mr. Haggerty and Nelson Reed were ordained elders at the Christmas Conference, is, of itself, conclusive. Mr. Reed was living in, or very near, Baltimore, when Mr. Soule was a resident of that city, and when M'Caine wrote his "History and Mystery" in the same city. In his pamphlet M'Caine names Nelson Reed as one of the surviving members of the Christmas Conference. We think these testimonies have never been questioned. The reader is also referred to the statement of Dr. Coke, on page 36.

Smith, John. — In the Autobiography of the Rev. Henry Boehm (pp. 76, 77) is the following passage: "In this circuit I formed the acquaintance of Rev. John Smith, one of our old preachers. He was at the famous Christmas Conference of 1784. He lived in Chestertown, and his house was my home." Mr. Boehm is definite as to the fact stated, and his intimate acquaintance with Mr. Smith gave him abundant opportunity to know whereof he affirmed. Mr. Boehm kept a Journal, from which his auto-

biography was considerably composed. Mr. Boehm's character was such that his positive testimony to a matter of fact, in the case of a man whom he knew so well, is sufficient to establish it.

VASEY, THOMAS.—The fact that Thomas Vasey was present at the Christmas Conference is shown by Bishop Asbury in the statement he wrote on the ordination parchment of the Rev. William M'Kendree, when the latter was set apart to the office of Bishop. In that parchment, which is printed in Paine's "Life of M'Kendree," Asbury records the following facts of Methodist Church history: "On the 27th day of December, 1784, at a General Conference in Baltimore, after being ordained Deacon and Elder, I was elected to the office of Superintendent, or Bishop, by the unanimous voice of the General Conference, held in Baltimore, December 24, 1784. The following persons assisted in my ordination, namely: Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law of Jesus College in the University of Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, by the ordination and appointment of Mr. John Wesley, and other clergymen of the Church of England; also assisted in the ordination, William Otterbein, Minister of the German Presbyterian Church; and Richard Whatcoat with Thomas Vasey, regularly ordained elders by John Wesley. These four solemnly set me apart for a Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

WARE, THOMAS.—In an article on "The Christmas Conference," by Mr. Ware, in the "Methodist Quarterly Review," January, 1832, page 98, he says: "From what I have written it will be gathered that when the Methodist Episcopal Church was constituted, I was there. But as I was little more than a spectator, at this interesting period of our history, I shall take the liberty to speak of the preachers that composed the Christmas Conference, as

if not numbered among them." Unfortunately, in all his extended reminiscences of that Conference, Mr. Ware does not name any of the preachers who were present, except Coke, Dickins, Pigman, and Boyer.

Watters, William.—Mr. Watters is not mentioned by Lednum in connection with the General Conference of 1784. Neither does Stevens mention him as one of the members of that celebrated body. Watters was the first native itinerant preacher in the United States. He was yet living in the region of Baltimore when M'Caine wrote the "History and Mystery." In an appendix to that pamphlet, (pp. 75, 76,) M'Caine printed a letter, which he addressed to certain venerable ministers, containing a number of inquiries in regard to facts relating to the organization of the Church; and in a foot-note, (p. 76,) M'Caine says: "The above letter was addressed to the following brethren, who were members of the Conference in 1784: The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, Rev. Lemuel Green, Rev. Thomas Ware, Rev. Nelson Reed, Rev. William Watters, and Rev. Edward Dromgoole." As Watters was well known to M'Caine, and as the latter was a leader at that time in a controversy which led him to a close scrutiny of Methodist ecclesiastical facts, and as, moreover, the above statement was published in the region where Watters long lived and had just died, and in the life-time of his widow who survived him about eighteen years, and as, furthermore, it seems never to have been called in question, it must be accepted as true. M'Caine was associated with Watters, and had good opportunity to know from his own lips the fact of his presence at that noted Conference. Asbury, in his notice of a Conference held at Pipe Creek, in May, 1801, says: "We had six elders present, to wit: William Watters, John Philips, Jr., Solomon Harris, Joseph Stone, John Cullison, and Alexander M'Caine." This extract shows that M'Caine had such relations with Watters as a fellow-laborer sixteen years after the Church was organized,

as warrant the belief that he spoke on Watters's authority when he asserted that Watters was a member of the Christmas Conference. In his Autobiography, published in 1806, Watters, who was evidently a modest man, does not say definitely that he was at the Christmas Conference, but his words imply that he was there. On page 102 he says: "On the 25th of December, 1784, our Conference met in Baltimore, to consider the plan of Church government which the doctor brought over, recommended by Mr. Wesley. It was adopted and unanimously agreed to with great satisfaction, and we became, instead of a religious society, a separate Church." On page 104, Watters says: "The doctor came over, and not only was the name of General Assistant changed to that of Superintendent, but we formed ourselves into a separate Church. This change was proposed to us by Mr. Wesley after we had craved his advice on the subject, but could not take effect till adopted by us; which was done in a deliberate, formal manner, at a Conference called for that purpose, in which there was not one dissenting voice." This appears like the account of one who participated in the scenes he describes. This, together with the testimony of M'Caine, must be considered as decisive. It may not be irrelevant to add that Mr. M'Caine was the Secretary of the General Conference of 1820, and was subsequently a member of the Book Committee.

WHATCOAT, RICHARD.—The presence of Whatcoat at the Christmas Conference is shown by the statement of Bishop Asbury that he assisted in the ordination of the latter as Superintendent, which statement is given on page 46 of this volume, under the name of Thomas Vasey. In his Journal, Whatcoat, himself, gives sufficient evidence of the fact of his presence at that first American Methodist General Conference.

Lednum's statement, and the names as he has placed them, are as follows: "The following ministers were cer-

tainly in attendance: Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, Freeborn Garrettson, William Gill, Reuben Ellis, Le Roy Cole, Richard Ivey, James O'Kelly, John Haggerty, Nelson Reed, James O. Cromwell, Jeremiah Lambert, John Dickins, William Glendenning, Francis Poythress, Joseph Everett, William Black, William Phoebus, and Thomas Ware." *

In addition to those given by Lednum, the following names of members of the Christmas Conference are recorded in the preceding pages, namely: Edward Dromgoole, Ira Ellis, Jonathan Forrest, Lemuel Green, John Smith, William Watters, Ignatius Pigman, and Caleb Boyer. In respect to Boyer there is, as has been shown, on page 37, an apparent conflict between the testimony of Dr. Coke and that of Thomas Ware. But as Ware's testimony is circumstantial and direct, we accept it, and reconcile the discrepancy by the hypothesis that Boyer was not present during the whole session, and so was absent from the ordination service, and that thereby Coke was led to record him as not present at the Conference.

An illustration of the uncertainty of the early Methodist documents is furnished in the case of Michael Ellis. In his obituary, in the "General Minutes" of 1832, it is stated that he was ordained a deacon on the day that Mr. Asbury was ordained Bishop. On the contrary, Dr. Coke, in his Journal in the "Arminian Magazine," states that Michael Ellis was ordained a deacon at the Conference held in Baltimore, in June, 1785. Coke's statement is forty-seven years earlier than that in the "Minutes."

Thus documentary evidence is given of the presence at the Christmas Conference of all the preachers whom Mr. Lednum says were "certainly" there, except one; and as Lednum is so accurate on this subject, and as his information was, it is to be presumed, adequate to justify his statement, we accept his authority in the instance of

* "Rise of Methodism in America," p. 413.

Poythress. Besides furnishing proof, which Lednum has failed to do, of the presence at the Christmas Conference of a score of those who he states were "certainly" there, we have obtained evidence, from trustworthy documents, of the presence there of eight other preachers, including Boyer. Thus the largest and, at the same time, the only authenticated catalogue of the members of the Christmas Conference in existence is that which is here presented. It contains—including Poythress and Boyer—twenty-nine names. Coke says that, of a total of eighty-one preachers, nearly sixty were present. It is probable that there were about twenty-five absentees, and of the others — numbering, perhaps, twenty-five — who were present, the evidence as to who they were is now probably forever vanished. It is a cause for deep regret that the two Superintendents, Coke and Asbury, did not record in their Journals a complete list of the names of the men who were associated with them at the Christmas Conference in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. As they did not, however, it is a matter for gratulation that, after the lapse of a hundred years, by means of relics of Methodist antiquity that have floated down to the Centennial year, such as magazines, journals, pamphlets, and autobiographies, the Church may know the names of half the Methodist preachers who composed that interesting and momentous body, the Christmas Conference.

CHAPTER III.

MR. WESLEY'S RELATION TO THE NEW CHURCH.

DID John Wesley propose to the American Methodists the organization of a Church? Was it his *desire* that they should construct a new ecclesiastical structure?

In seeking the truth of American Methodist history, the author of these pages has no case to advocate, no theories to maintain. Therefore, he will impartially present the evidence respecting the design of Mr. Wesley in sending Dr. Coke to America, so that each reader may determine the question on its merits.

The evidence as to whether Wesley contemplated a separate Church organization in the United States is of three kinds: First, the acts of Wesley; second, the recorded utterances of Wesley; third, the understanding had by Dr. Coke and the members of the Christmas Conference of Mr. Wesley's intention in the matter.

Mr. Wesley's acts and words seem at variance here. Three things were done by him which seem as if he designed that a new Episcopal Church, distinct and separate from every other Church, should be organized. These were: first, the ordination of Dr. Coke as General Superintendent; second, the preparation of a doctrinal creed; third, the provision of a liturgy. As to the first, it may be asked, If the office of Superintendent had no more significance in his view than that of General Assistant—which was itself a superintendency, and was then exercised by Asbury—why did Mr. Wesley adopt the solemn formality of consecrating Coke by the imposition of hands? With respect to the second the inquiry arises, If he designed that the American societies should continue in connection with the

Church of England, why did Mr. Wesley provide for them a theological creed? If they were to become an independent Church, it was expedient and, indeed, necessary that they should deliver to the world that form of doctrine which they would maintain and propagate. If, however, they were to remain adherents of the English Church, the Thirty-nine Articles, unaltered, constituted their symbol of faith. Respecting the third act of Mr. Wesley, namely, the provision of a liturgy, its significance is greatest when viewed in connection with the ordination of Coke and the abridgment of the Thirty-nine Articles. Apart by itself, the fact that Mr. Wesley sent a prayer book, which he had adapted for their use, to the Methodists in America might only signify his desire that they should observe a certain form of worship; but, in connection with the ordination of Coke and the provision of a creed, it seems to signify more. It may surely be asked, If Wesley had no intention that a separate Church should be formed, why, then, did he provide an ordained superintendency, a creed, and a prayer book? When, however, we examine what Mr. Wesley wrote of his action toward the American Methodists in 1784, we find that his words change the aspect of his acts. Contemplated in the light of his words, Wesley's acts seem of less significance than when viewed apart by themselves.

The writings of Mr. Wesley on this subject seem at variance with his acts:

First. In that in the certificate of Coke as Superintendent he assigns, as the reason for setting him apart to that office, the following: "Many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and *still adhere to the* doctrine and *discipline of the Church of England*, are greatly distressed for the want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the usage of

the same Church." It is evident that the Methodists in an independent Church might still remain, in some sense, under Wesley's care, and abide in the doctrines of the Church of England; but how, in such case, they could "adhere to the Discipline" of that Church, if such adherence involved submission to its authority, is not so obvious.

Second. In the Minutes of the English Conference of the year 1785 is a statement signed by John Wesley and dated August 30th of that year, eight months after the Christmas Conference, in which he says: "We were strongly importuned by our brethren in America to go over and help them. Several preachers willingly offered themselves for the service, and several went from time to time. God blessed their labors in an uncommon manner. Many sinners were converted to God, and many societies formed under the same rules as were observed in England, insomuch that at present the American societies contain more than eighteen thousand members. But since the late Revolution in North America these have been in great distress. The clergy, having no sustenance either from England or from the American States, have been obliged, almost universally, to leave the country and seek their food elsewhere. Hence those who had been members of the Church had none either to administer the Lord's Supper or to baptize their children. They applied to England over and over, but to no purpose. Judging this to be a case of real necessity, I took a step which, for peace and quietness, I had refrained from taking for many years. I exercised that power which I am fully persuaded the great Shepherd and Bishop of the Church has given me: I appointed three of our laborers to go and help them, by not only preaching the word of God, but likewise by administering the Lord's Supper and baptizing their children throughout that vast tract of land.

"These are the steps which, not of choice but necessity, I have slowly and deliberately taken. If any one is pleased

to call this separating from the Church he may. But the law of England does not call it so."

Here Mr. Wesley seems to set forth that his intention in sending Dr. Coke to America was not to separate the societies from the Church of England, but to give them the sacraments. For this purpose he ordained Whatcoat and Vasey and sent them with Coke. After writing what is in the above extract, Mr. Wesley immediately proceeds to add: "After Dr. Coke's return from America many of our friends begged I would consider the case of Scotland, where we had been laboring for many years, and had seen so little fruit of our labors. Multitudes, indeed, have set out well, but they were soon turned out of the way; chiefly by their ministers either disputing against the truth, or refusing to admit them to the Lord's Supper, yea, or to baptize their children, unless they would promise to have no fellowship with the Methodists. Many who did so soon lost all they had gained, and became more the children of hell than before. To prevent this I at length consented *to take the same step with regard to Scotland which I had done with regard to America.* But this is not a separation from the Church at all. Whatever then is done, either in America or Scotland, *is no separation from the Church of England.* I have no thought of this: I have many objections against it."*

Mr. Wesley's language here is very plain and explicit. He affirms that his action with respect to Scotland was the same as that with respect to America. In the first "Life of Wesley" that was ever written, the authors of which were Dr. Coke and the Rev. Henry Moore, in the edition of 1792, Mr. Wesley's provision for the societies in Scotland is stated as follows: "Having patiently suffered these things for a considerable time to the great detriment of true religion, he at length resolved to

* "Arminian Magazine," 1786, pp. 677–78; also "Works," volume vii, pp. 314, 315. The italics are mine.

give his societies in that kingdom all the help he possibly could. He, therefore, at the Conference held in London in the year 1785, being assisted by two other presbyters of the Church of England, 'set apart,' to use his own words, 'three of our well-tried preachers, John Pawson, Thomas Handy, and Joseph Taylor, to minister in Scotland,' (that is, to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.) 'I trust,' continues he, 'God will bless their ministrations and show that he has sent them.' From this time the societies in Scotland have had a stability which they had not before." * He also "recommended to the Scotch Methodists the use of the abridged Common Prayer." † When Wesley wrote of what he had done for the relief of the societies in America and in Scotland, eight months, we repeat, had passed since the Christmas Conference organized the Methodist Episcopal Church. In explaining his provision for America and Scotland he declares that there "*is no separation from the Church of England.*" There is abundant evidence, however, that the American Methodists understood from the first that the action at Baltimore, in the last days of 1784, effected their total severance from the English Church. Wesley does not appear to have seen how decisive was that action. He seems to have considered it as having no more significance than his provision for the societies in Scotland.

In a letter to Charles Wesley of the date of August 19, 1785, Mr. Wesley said, respecting separation from the Church: "I no more separate from it now than I did in 1758."

Having no thought, as he declares, of separating the American societies from the Church of England; which fact he also indicates in Coke's certificate of ordination in the words: "Who desire to continue under my care and in the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England;"

* Coke and Moore's "Life of Wesley," pp. 417, 418.

† Myles's "Chronological History of Methodism."

did Wesley then devise a scheme for the organization of a Church in the United States which should be not only independent of the English establishment, but also of his own ecclesiastical authority?

Whatever Mr. Wesley *did* design, it is clear that he *did not* intend to relinquish his power as the chief ruler of American Methodism. Until the Christmas Conference of 1784, the Methodists, in whatever part of the world they were known, had but one form of discipline. John Wesley was the author of that discipline, and his government was as universal as Methodism. After the year 1784 Mr. Wesley continued to show the same authority toward the American Methodists that he had displayed from the beginning. He seems, indeed, to have required a more formal submission with the embassy of Coke than before; for Mr. Asbury says, "After the Revolution we were called upon to give a printed obligation which here follows and could not be dispensed with—it must be: 'During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the Gospel, ready in matters belonging to Church government to obey his commands; and we do engage after his death to do every thing that we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America and the political interests of the States, to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe.'" * So far as Asbury was concerned, this declaration of submission to Mr. Wesley, formally made by the Christmas Conference, was not of choice, but, as he indicates in the words just quoted, of necessity. He says: "I never approved of that binding minute. I did not think it practical expediency to obey Mr. Wesley at three thousand miles distance in all matters relative to Church government."

Less than two years after the organization of the Church Mr. Wesley designated Mr. Whatcoat as a Superintendent, in a letter addressed to Dr. Coke, dated September 6, 1786,

* Asbury's Letter to the Rev. Joseph Benson.

as follows: "I desire that you would appoint a General Conference of our preachers in the United States to meet at Baltimore on May 1, 1787, and that Mr. Whatcoat may be appointed Superintendent with Mr. Asbury." It was said that he displayed even higher authority by indicating an intention of removing Mr. Asbury from the office of Superintendent, and recalling him to Europe. Mr. Asbury says: "He rigidly contended for a special and independent right of governing the chief minister or ministers of our order, which in our judgment meant not only to put him out of office, but to remove him from the continent to elsewhere that our father saw fit; and that notwithstanding our constitution, and the right of electing every Church officer, and more especially our Superintendent. We were told 'not till after the death of Mr. Wesley' could our constitution have its full operation."* If Mr. Wesley designed that the measures contemplated by the embassy of Coke should release American Methodism in any degree from his control, would he have asserted such power after the new departure was accomplished?

The designation of Whatcoat for the office of Superintendent provoked resistance. Opposition was shown by positive words, and also by Conference action. The Rev. William Phœbus says that Dr. Coke had "some directions from Mr. Wesley to give the Conference; in which directions Richard Whatcoat was nominated for a third Superintendent. One ventured to say that Mr. Wesley took too much on him—yea, too much to be borne with by Americans; that he might increase his impositions if his power were not checked. It might grow enormous, even to popery." †

Asbury, however, when informed by Dr. Coke that Wesley had designated Whatcoat for the superintendency,

* Letter to Benson.

† "Memoirs of the Rev. Richard Whatcoat; late Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church." By William Phœbus, M. D. New York, 1828.

acquiesced. The Conference at Charleston did likewise. When the matter was brought before the Virginia Conference it was strongly opposed by James O'Kelly. This opposition surprised and pained Dr. Coke. It was agreed, however, to submit the case for final decision to the Conference soon to be held in Baltimore, "on condition that the Virginia Conference might send a deputy to explain their sentiments." * At the Baltimore Conference the Bishops called the elders into council to consider it, and they, notwithstanding Coke's advocacy, decided adversely. One reason urged by O'Kelly against Whatcoat's appointment was, he "did not consider the person [Whatcoat] adequate to the task on account of his age, and also that he was a stranger in the wilderness of America." Another reason assigned at Conference was that, if Whatcoat should be accepted as Superintendent, Wesley would possibly recall Mr. Asbury. Coke insisted that the Conference was bound to be governed by Mr. Wesley's wish respecting Mr. Whatcoat, because of the "printed obligation" of 1784, to obey him in matters relating to Church government. The case was submitted to the Conference, and the decision was against the appointment of Whatcoat. The Conference also expunged the resolution to obey Mr. Wesley, and his name did not appear in the next Minutes.

This procedure grieved Mr. Wesley. "His natural temper was warm and vehement. Religion had done much in correcting this, yet it was still visible. Persecution from without he bore without wrath, and apparently, almost without feeling. But when he was opposed by his preachers or people his displeasure was visible. It has been said of him,

> "'He carried anger as the flint bears fire;
> Which much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
> And straight is cold again.'" †

* Snethen's Reply to O'Kelly.

† The Rev. Jonathan Crowther, "Portraiture of Methodism," p. 71. London, 1811.

He blamed Mr. Asbury. The latter says that Mr. Wesley was told "that no sooner had he granted the Americans what they wished than they declared themselves independent of him." * "Mr. Asbury considered Mr. Rankin in the light of an opponent, and it is certain that if there was any dependence to be placed in the correspondence of his English friend, Mr. Rankin did use all his influence with Mr. Wesley to have him recalled. Mr. Asbury was informed that when the news arrived that Mr. Wesley's name was left off the American Minutes, Mr. Rankin, who was present, without waiting for the evidence, exclaimed, 'That's Frank Asbury's doings.'"† In a letter to the Rev. Joseph Benson, Asbury says: "The counsel of Diotrephes‡ in a full Conference was in substance this, 'If he had the power and authority of Mr. Wesley he would call Frank Asbury home directly.' John Harper was the man who was present in Conference and heard this advice given, and told me several years after in America with his own mouth."

Mr. Wesley expressed himself strongly respecting what he thought was Mr. Asbury's conduct in the matter of the rejection of Whatcoat as a Superintendent, and the removal of Wesley's name from the Minutes. He wrote to Whatcoat: "It was not well judged of Brother Asbury to *suffer*, much less indirectly encourage, the foolish step in the last Conference. Every preacher present ought, both in duty and in prudence, to have said, 'Brother Asbury, Mr. Wesley is your father, consequently ours.' Candor will affirm this in the face of the world. It is highly probable that disallowing *me* will, as soon as my head is laid, occasion a total breach between the English and American Methodists. They will naturally say, 'If

* Asbury's Letter to Benson.

† The Rev. Nicholas Snethen's "Methodist History" in "Wesleyan Repository." Mr. Snethen traveled with Bishop Asbury as early as the year 1800.

‡ By "Diotrephes" Asbury undoubtedly meant Rankin.

they can do without us, we can do without them.' But they would find a greater difference than they imagine. Next would follow a separation among themselves."* In a letter of October 31, 1789, which was published by Hammett in Charleston, Mr. Wesley said, "I was a little surprised when I received some letters from Mr. Asbury affirming that no person in Europe knew how to direct those in America. Soon after he flatly refused to receive Mr. Whatcoat in the character I sent him. He told George Shadford, 'Mr. Wesley and I are like Cæsar and Pompey; he will bear no equal, and I will bear no superior.'† And accordingly he quietly sat by until his friends voted my name out of the American Minutes. This completed the matter and showed that he had no connection with me." Of the trouble resulting from this conflict of authority Mr. Asbury wrote: "And why was I thus charged? Because I did not establish Mr. Wesley's absolute authority over the American Connection. For myself, this I had submitted to, but the Americans were too jealous to bind themselves to yield to him in all things relative to Church government. Mr. Wesley was a man they had never seen —was three thousand miles off—how might submission in such a case be expected? Brother Coke and myself gave offense to the Connection by enforcing Mr. Wesley's will in some matters." In relation to rescinding the obligation to obey Mr. Wesley, Asbury says: "At the first General Conference, I was mute and modest when it passed; and I was mute when it was expunged."

James O'Kelly publicly charged that Mr. Asbury was the chief agent in this transaction. In his "Apology" O'Kelly said: "After these things Francis took with

* This letter indicates that up to this time (1787) Mr. Wesley regarded the Methodists in Europe and America as one people, and governed alike by him. The letter was published in Phœbus's "Life of Whatcoat."

† The understanding appears to have been that Wesley, in attributing this language to Asbury, was mistaken.

him a few chosen men, and in a clandestine manner expelled John, whose surname was Wesley, from the Methodist Episcopal Church."

The Rev. Nicholas Snethen, in his "Reply to O'Kelly," says that Mr. Asbury related to him "a particular detail of every circumstance relative to himself that had relation to the leaving of Mr. Wesley's name out of the American Minutes, from which it appears that Mr. Asbury was not deserving of the smallest blame in the whole business." Mr. Snethen adds: "As the most effectual way of dispelling darkness is by opposing light to it, a simple relation of that event will, no doubt, be deemed sufficient. At a Conference held in Baltimore, May 1, 1787, a vote was taken that Richard Whatcoat should not be ordained Superintendent, and that Mr. Wesley's name should for the future be left off the American Minutes. Mr. Asbury neither made the motion nor advocated it; the whole case was constitutionally carried through the Conference and voted by a fair majority. Mr. Asbury, indeed, foresaw the consequence when the question was in contemplation, and informed the patrons of it that he expected all the blame would be imputed to him, if it should be carried. Had he been under the influence of the spirit of prophecy, his fears could not have been better grounded." *

The Rev. Thomas Morrell, in a pamphlet entitled "Truth Discovered," gave an account of this procedure. "Early in 1787," says Mr. Morrell, "Mr. Wesley intimated a design of removing Mr. Asbury from America to Europe, and of sending us a Superintendent of his own nomination. When the Conference assembled, some of the eldest and most sensible of the elders observed that Mr. Wesley had no authority to remove Mr. Asbury, much less could he *impose* a Superintendent on us without our choice; for it was written in our constitution that 'no person should be

* Snethen's "Reply to Mr. O'Kelly's Apology for Protesting against the Methodist Episcopal Church Government." Philadelphia, 1800.

ordained a Superintendent over us without the consent of the majority of the Conference;' that no such consent had been given; that though they highly venerated Mr. Wesley, and were willing to receive his advice, and preserve and promote our union with him, and our Methodist brethren in Europe, as far as the political interest of our country would authorize us; yet they could not give up their rights to any man on earth. And after a number of arguments to show the impropriety and impolicy of any man having the power to exercise such an uncontrollable and unlimited authority over us, as Mr. Wesley wished to do, and to prevent him from exercising this power in the present case, by virtue of his name standing at the head of the Minutes, they moved that it should be struck off. The vote was carried and his name was omitted. Mr. Wesley complained that we were ungrateful. We felt ourselves grieved that the good old man was hurt, and determined to give him every satisfaction in our power, consistent with our rights, and in 1789 the Conference consented that his name should be restored on the Minutes, in testimony of our union with and respect for him; but inserted in such a manner as to preclude him from exercising an unconstitutional power over us."

The omission of his name not only displeased Mr. Wesley, but also some of the American Methodists. "This was a time of trial," says Phœbus, "with many who laid it to heart. It was to be feared that part would continue a Society, or form again under Mr. Wesley, independent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Many felt like being scattered when the shepherd had received so heavy a blow from his friends." * Mr. Snethen says that the removal of the name of Wesley from the Minutes, "gave rise to feelings of a very unpleasant nature. Dr. Coke actually commenced the complaint in the pulpit, and was only restrained by the timely and resolute interfer-

* Phœbus's "Memoirs of Whatcoat," p. 67.

ence of some of the more judicious of the preachers." We shall hereafter see with what warmth Coke did refer to this action in his sermon on the death of Wesley, preached in Baltimore, in the spring of 1791.

One has said, "The plan of Mr. Wesley was peculiar. He aimed to retain for the Methodists their full membership in the National Church, and yet a peculiar Christian society. The history of this novel plan is the history of Methodism in England and its colonies." Mr. Wesley, as we have seen, rejected the imputation that he had separated from the Church of England. He ever claimed to be a clergyman of that Church. Yet he continued to exercise authority over the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States until, to prevent the possibility of his recalling Mr. Asbury to Europe, and otherwise attempting to control their ecclesiastical affairs, the American preachers voted his name out of their Minutes. Did he consider himself the ruler of an independent Episcopal Church in America? Furthermore, Dr. Coke continued to be a member of Mr. Wesley's Conference in England, at the same time that he was a Superintendent or, as he chose to be called, a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. Did Mr. Wesley regard Coke as a Superintendent of a separate and independent Church? After Wesley's death Coke was frequently the secretary of the Wesleyan Conference, and in 1797 and in 1805 he was its president.

There is no evidence that Wesley, in appointing Coke and Asbury Superintendents of the American Methodists, contemplated that a Conference would be called to consider and decide upon his action. The fact that he not only appointed Dr. Coke a Superintendent, but also consecrated him to that office and instructed him to consecrate Asbury to the same office, without having consulted the American preachers, shows that he did not consider that they had any authority in the matter. There is evidence that the Conference was proposed and agreed

upon after Dr. Coke's arrival at Barratt's Chapel, in Delaware, where he first met Mr. Asbury. Thomas Ware says that after Coke had shown his credentials to Asbury, the latter said: "Doctor, we will call the preachers together, and the voice of the preachers shall be to me the voice of God. A Conference was, accordingly, agreed upon."* In the "Reply to O'Kelly's Apology," the Rev. Nicholas Snethen says, "that he has heard Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and several members of that Conference declare that Mr. Asbury refused to serve as a Superintendent or Bishop without the election of the Conference, and that he was *elected by a unanimous vote.*"

The Rev. John Dickins was the first preacher who heard from Dr. Coke, after his arrival in America, the nature of his mission. Coke's account of his interview with Dickins does not indicate that either of them had any thought of a Conference. In his Journal of November 3, 1784, just after he landed in New York, Coke says: "I have opened Mr. Wesley's plan to Brother Dickins, the traveling preacher stationed at this place, and he highly approves of it; says that all the preachers most earnestly long for such a regulation, and that Mr. Asbury he is sure will agree to it. He presses me most earnestly to make it public, because, as he most justly argues, Mr. Wesley has determined the point, and therefore *it is not to be investigated, but complied with.*"† If the plan of Wesley was "not to be investigated, but complied with," as Dickins insisted, why call a General Conference? The scheme was fixed already, and in the view of Dickins and Coke there was but one thing to do, namely, not to consider it, *but to comply with it.*

There is a significant allusion to Asbury, in the account of Coke's interview with Dickins, in the Journal of Coke in the Philadelphia "Arminian Magazine," which does not

* "Methodist Quarterly Review," vol. xiv, 1832, p. 97.

† "Extracts of the Journals of the Rev. Dr. Coke's Five Visits to America," p. 13. London, 1793. The italics are mine.

appear in the volume of his Journals. The two accounts are substantially alike, except in one sentence. In the account *in the volume* that sentence stands thus: "He presses me most earnestly to make it public because, as he most justly argues, Mr. Wesley has determined the point, and therefore it is not to be investigated, but complied with." In the *Magazine* the sentence appears thus: "He presses me earnestly to make it public, because, as he most justly argues, Mr. Wesley has determined the point, *though Mr. Asbury is most respectfully to be consulted in respect to every part of the execution of it.*" *

Francis Asbury was at that time the head of American Methodism. His influence and authority here were about what Wesley's authority was in England. The preachers trusted him, loved him, followed him. No man could take out of his hands the rising Church which he had fostered, and to which he was united by bonds formed of affection, toil, sacrifice, and suffering. His ability as a leader was of the highest order. He had, by his masterful ecclesiastical generalship, held the Methodists in America in unity amidst the distractions of war, when Wesley turned his pen against the Revolution, and when every English preacher except himself forsook the trembling Methodist flock; he had also maintained that unity through the additional agitations and almost rupture resulting from withholding the sacraments. Now when independence was established, and a new era had dawned, Asbury was securely seated as the foremost ruler of Methodism in America. About all that in the circumstances it was possible for even Wesley to do, was to formally recognize Asbury's position as leader and overseer of the Methodists in the United States. Asbury was their shepherd. They knew his voice, and would follow him. Coke was a stranger; Wesley they revered, but only a

* The Journal of Bishop Coke: "Arminian Magazine," (American,) 1789, p. 242. I have put the reference to Asbury in italics.

few of them had ever seen him, and his voice reached them but feebly across the Atlantic. Asbury, and not Wesley, was the real Bishop of Methodism in the New World. Coke was too sagacious to fail to comprehend the situation, and he saw that prudence required that Mr. Asbury should be "most respectfully consulted in respect to every part of the execution of" his mission. There is reason to believe that Asbury, and not Wesley, nor Coke, originated the Conference which did investigate and act upon the matters involved in Coke's embassy.

One of the reasons noticed by Thomas Ware for the action of the Conference in 1787, by which the declaration of submission to Mr. Wesley was canceled, was that Wesley proposed that matters should be determined, not by vote of Conference, but by the Superintendents. Wesley's plan of holding Conference was to invite such preachers as he chose to confer with, reserving to himself the power of decision in all cases. As an illustration of this, take the Conference which was held in London the year the Christmas Conference closed its session—1785. Concerning it, Mr. Wesley says: "About seventy preachers were present whom I had invited by name. One consequence of this was that we had no contention or altercation at all." Those whose opinions he did not wish to hear, he, of course, did not invite. Mr. Ware says: "This he deemed the more excellent way, and as we had volunteered and pledged ourselves to obey, he instructed the doctor, conformably to his own usage, to put as few questions to vote as possible, saying: 'If you and Brother Asbury and Brother Whatcoat are agreed, it is enough.' To place the power of deciding all questions discussed, or nearly all, in the hands of the Superintendents, was what could never be introduced among us." * Now, did Wesley ignore the whole theory and practice of his life with respect to ecclesiastical government, by direct-

* "Life of Ware," p. 130.

ing that upon the arrival of Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey in the United States, the preachers should be convened to decide, by vote, whether they would accept the Superintendents, the creed, and the liturgy, which he had provided? This would have been a good American procedure, but it could hardly have been designed by Wesley.

With reference to his interview with Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury says: "I was shocked when first informed of the intention of these my brethren in coming to this country. It may be of God. My answer then was, If the preachers unanimously choose me, I shall not act in the capacity I have hitherto done by Mr. Wesley's appointment."* Here was a motion toward home government. Mr. Asbury proposed to be governed by the preachers rather than by a man who, however good and wise, was three thousand miles from the field. The Rev. Nicholas Snethen says that Asbury "in securing to the General Conference the election of the Bishops, by declining to serve under Mr. Wesley's appointment until he was elected by the American preachers, subserved the cause of independence."† Mr. Asbury proceeds to say that "the design of organizing the Methodists into an independent Episcopal Church was opened to the preachers present, and it was agreed to call a General Conference, to meet at Baltimore the ensuing Christmas."

Dr. Coke's account of his interview with Mr. Asbury, after they met in Barratt's Chapel, is as follows: "After dining, in company with eleven of the preachers, at our Sister Barratt's, about a mile from the chapel, I privately opened our plan to Mr. Asbury. *He expressed considerable doubts concerning it, which I rather applaud than otherwise*,‡ but informed me that he had received some intimations of my arrival on the continent; and as he thought it probable

* "Asbury's Journal," vol. i, p. 484.

† Snethen's sermon in "The Christian World," 1841.

‡ The language I have italicised is not in the volume of Coke's Journals.

I might meet him on that day, and might have something of importance to communicate to him from Mr. Wesley, he had, therefore, called together a considerable number of preachers to form a council, and if they were of opinion that it would be expedient immediately to call a Conference, it should be done. They were accordingly called, and, after debate, were unanimously of opinion that it would be best immediately to call a Conference of all the traveling preachers on the continent."* Suppose they had decided not to call a Conference, would Wesley's plan have been consummated? If so, would a separate Church have risen?

Nothing could be more clear than that the General Conference of 1784 was agreed upon by Asbury and several of his preachers, whom he had selected to form a council of war in the exigency. By their act the Conference was convened. Dr. Coke evidently acquiesced in the measure as the only means by which Mr. Asbury's co-operation could be secured. We repeat, Wesley's appointment of Asbury as joint Superintendent was doubtless made without any expectation that it would be submitted for ratification to the American preachers in Conference.

The subject of a separate Church organization was freely discussed during the interval between the Council of the preachers, at which a General Conference was agreed upon, and the assembling of the Conference. Whatcoat mentions a conversation he had with Michael Ellis in December, "to whom," he says, "I gave an account of our mission. He was greatly pleased."† Asbury held consultations with his ministerial associates on the subject, for he says in his Journal, November 23, "Brother Poythress and myself had much talk about the new plan."

* Journal of Coke, "Arminian Magazine," Philadelphia, 1789, pp. 243, 244.

† Whatcoat's Journal. This fact shows it to be highly probable that Michael Ellis attended the Christmas Conference.

The "plan," as Asbury had previously stated, was the "organizing the Methodists into an independent Episcopal Church." Who was the author of the plan, Asbury does not say; but the inference would be that it was devised by Wesley, and disclosed to Asbury by Dr. Coke. How Wesley could have formed such a plan, in view of his declaration that what he did with respect to America was no separation from the Church of England; that he had no thought of such a separation; and the further fact that he intended still to exercise control over the American Methodists, is not apparent.

The next question to be considered is, What understanding had Dr. Coke and the members of the Christmas Conference respecting Mr. Wesley's design in relation to the organization of a separate Church? Dr. Coke received Wesley's plan directly from his lips. What did Coke understand that plan was? Drew, in his "Life of Coke," says that, in the month of February, 1784, Mr. Wesley "called Dr. Coke into his private chamber, and, after some preparatory observations, introduced the important subject, in nearly the following manner:

"That, as the Revolution in America had separated the United States from the mother country forever, and the Episcopal establishment was utterly abolished, the societies had been represented to him in a most deplorable condition. That an appeal had also been made to him, through Mr. Asbury, in which he was requested to provide for them some mode of Church government suited to their exigencies, and that, having long and seriously revolved the subject in his thoughts, he intended to adopt the plan which he was now about to unfold. That as he had invariably endeavored, in every step he had taken, to keep as closely to the Bible as possible, so, on the present occasion, he hoped he was not about to deviate from it. That keeping his eye upon the conduct of the primitive Churches in the

ages of unadulterated Christianity, he had much admired the mode of ordaining Bishops which the Church at Alexandria had practiced. That to preserve its purity, that Church would never suffer the interference of a foreign Bishop in any of their ordinations; but that the presbyters of that venerable apostolic Church, on the death of a Bishop, exercised the right of ordaining another from their own body by the laying on of their own hands, and that this practice continued among them for two hundred years till the days of Dionysius. And finally, that being himself a presbyter, he wished Dr. Coke to accept ordination from his hands, and to proceed, in that character, to the continent of America to superintend the societies in the United States."

Subsequently Dr. Coke wrote to Mr. Wesley, as follows: "I intended to trouble you no more about my going to America; but your observations incline me to address you again on the subject.

"If some one, in whom you could place the fullest confidence, and whom you think likely to have sufficient influence and prudence and delicacy of conduct for the purpose, were to go over and return, you would then have a source of sufficient information to determine on any points or propositions. I may be destitute of the last-mentioned essential qualification, (to the former I lay claim without reserve;) otherwise my taking such a voyage might be expedient.

"By this means, you might have fuller information concerning the state of the country and the societies than epistolary correspondence can give you; and there might be a cement of union, remaining after your death, between the societies and preachers of the two countries. If the awful event of your decease should happen before my removal to the world of spirits, it is almost certain that I should have business enough, of indispensable importance, on my hands in these kingdoms."

The following letter of Dr. Coke was sent by him, August 9, 1784, to Mr. Wesley, who was then in Wales on his way to Bristol:

"Honored and Dear Sir: The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it appears to me that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you, by the imposition of your hands, and that you should lay hands on Brother Whatcoat and Brother Vasey, for the following reasons: First. It seems to me the most scriptural way and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive Churches. Second. I may want all the influence in America which you can throw into my scale. Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds that he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed that he would not receive any person deputed by you with part of the superintendency of the work invested in him, or words which evidently implied so much. I do not find any—the least degree—of prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury; on the contrary, a very great love and esteem, and am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me, but rather to lie at his feet in all things. But as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me often, and it is well to provide against all events, and an authority formally received from you will—I am conscious of it—be fully admitted by the people, and my exercising the office of ordination without that formal authority may be disputed if there be any oposition on any other account; I could, therefore, earnestly wish that you would exercise that power, in this instance, which I have not the shadow of a doubt but God hath invested you with, for the good of our connection. I think you have tried me too often to doubt whether I will, in any degree, use the power you are pleased to invest me with further than I believe absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work. Third. In respect to

my brethren, (Brothers Whatcoat and Vasey,) it is very uncertain, indeed, whether any of the clergy mentioned by Brother Rankin will stir a step with me in the work, except Mr. Jarrett—and is by no means certain that even he will choose to join me in ordaining—and propriety and universal practice make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me that every thing should be prepared, and every thing proper be done that can possibly be done this side the water. You can do all this in Mr. C——n's house in your chamber, and afterward (according to Mr. Fletcher's advice) give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us. For the purpose of laying hands on Brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Mr. C. down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you. In respect to Brother Rankin's argument that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known or not known; if not known then no odium will arise, but if known you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with, perhaps, your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

"Your most dutiful T. COKE."

The expression of Asbury, which Coke, in the above letter, says Mr. Brackenbury mentioned, in regard to his unwillingness to divide the superintendency with a person deputed by Wesley, may be illustrated by the following passage, in a letter of Asbury, dated West Jersey, September 20, 1783, a little less than a year before the ordination of Coke, and addressed to Mr. Wesley. Mr. Asbury says: "No person can manage the lay preachers here so well, it is thought, as one that has been at the raising of most of them. No man can make a proper change upon paper to send one here and another [there] without

knowing the circuits and the gifts of all the preachers, unless he is always out among them. My dear sir, a matter of the greatest consequence now lies before you. If you send preachers to America, let them be proper persons. We are now united; all things go on well considering the storms and difficulties we have had to ride through. I wish men of the greatest understanding would write impartial accounts, for it would be better for us not to have preachers than to be divided. This I know, great men that can do good, may do hurt if they should take the wrong road. I have labored and suffered much to keep the people and preachers together, and if I am thought worthy to keep my place I should be willing to labor and suffer till death for peace and union."

Exactly six months later Asbury again wrote to Wesley declaring that he had no fondness for power, but exercised it rather by necessity; the welfare of the work making his rulership necessary, as he no doubt believed. He says: "You know, sir, it is not easy to rule, nor am I pleased with it; I bear it as my cross, yet it seems that a necessity is laid upon me."

Respecting the above letters of Dr. Coke to Mr. Wesley, nothing need be said here. The latter one is inserted in violation of the design to not introduce formal documents into this work, because it has a historical significance as a link in the chain of the evidence as to the steps taken by Mr. Wesley, in 1784, with respect to the Methodist societies in the United States of America.

In the sermon which he preached at the ordination of Bishop Asbury, Dr. Coke said that Mr. Wesley, "after long deliberation, saw it his duty to form his society in America into an independent Church; but he loved the most excellent liturgy of the Church of England, he loved its rites and ceremonies, and, therefore, adopted them in most instances for the present case."

Farther on in the sermon is this passage: "'Why, then,

did you not separate before?' It has long been the desire of the preachers and people. But they submitted to the superior judgment of Mr. Wesley, who, till the Revolution, doubted the propriety of the step."

The question is pertinent, In what sense did Dr. Coke here use the words "independent" and "separate?" After the Christmas Conference Mr. Wesley, in his narration of what he had done for the Methodists in the United States, said: "Whatever then is done, either in America or Scotland, is no separation from the Church of England. I have no thought of this. I have many objections to it."

More than six years after the Christmas Conference Dr. Coke, in a letter to Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Pennsylvania, refers to his action in that Conference, and expresses a doubt whether he did not transcend the authority which Mr. Wesley gave him. In that letter, dated April 24, 1791, more than a month after the death of Wesley, though that event was then evidently unknown to Coke, he says: "I am not sure but that I went farther in the separation of our Church in America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I received my commission, did intend. He did, indeed, solemnly invest me, so far as he had a right so to do, with Episcopal authority, *but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place.*"* This statement exhibits Coke's ultimate understanding of the scope of Wesley's plan. He also adds this weighty declaration: "This I am certain of, that he [Wesley] is now sorry for the separation." Thus we have Coke's authority for the fact that in the last days of his life Wesley regretted the action of the Christmas Conference in the matter of organizing an independent Episcopal Church.

It seems quite clear that Coke understood Wesley's plan, with respect to the American societies, to be that in

* I have put these very significant words of Dr. Coke in italics.

view of their grave exigencies, they should have a more formal superintendency than that which was then exercised by Asbury, who was Wesley's general assistant; and with that understanding he received ordination as General Superintendent from Wesley.

The statement of Thomas Ware, in his letter of December 1, 1828, that Dr. Coke, at the Christmas Conference, "argued" that "the plan of General Superintendency was in fact *a species of Episcopacy*," indicates how the doctor, from the premise of his ordination as Superintendent, may have followed what he conceived to be a logical conclusion, and thus exceeded the letter while still supposing that he kept within the spirit of his instructions. He, however, advocated a separate Church organization, for, says Ware, in the letter just quoted from, "Dr. Coke was in favor of taking the name, Methodist Episcopal Church." That fact may have been in his recollection when, six years subsequently, he wrote: "I am not sure but that I went farther in the separation of our Church in America than Mr. Wesley did intend." The question here arises: If Wesley planned an independent Church, why did he not suggest its name? Why, in the discussion of the name by which it should be distinguished from other Churches, was not the wish of Wesley indicated? There is no intimation that this was done. Says Thomas Ware: "The question arose, 'What name or title shall we take?' I thought I should be satisfied that we be denominated the Methodist Church, and so whispered to a brother sitting near me. But one proposed, I think it was John Dickins, that we should adopt the title of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Tyerman, in his "Life and Times of Wesley," says: "We have no fault to find with the American Methodists being called the Methodist Episcopal Church. They have the fullest right to such a designation if they choose to use it; but it was a name which Wesley never used."

The next point in this question is: What understanding had the members of the Christmas Conference, concerning Mr. Wesley's intention, with respect to a separate Church?

Freeborn Garrettson was a conspicuous member of that remarkable Conference. Respecting this question he speaks explicitly, in a letter addressed to the Rev. Alexander M'Caine, of the date of September 29, 1826, and published in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" in 1830. These are Mr. Garrettson's words: "I am fully of opinion the Christmas Conference were authorized by Mr. Wesley, to organize themselves under an Episcopal form of Church government. . . . Nearly forty years have passed away, and I cannot charge my mind with every minutia; however, instructions were communicated from Mr. Wesley, and as we were all young, humble, happy, and sincere, and well pleased with what he offered, I doubt not but that we followed his wishes to a *punctilio*."

Thomas Ware, in an article on "The Christmas Conference of 1784," published in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" in 1832, says: "We had met to congratulate each other and to praise the Lord for having raised the mind of our excellent Wesley above the fable of uninterrupted succession, and thereby paved our way to the delightful privileges we were henceforth to enjoy. The order of things devised by him for our organization, as a Church, filled us with solemn delight. It corresponded with what we did suppose we had a right to expect our God would do for us. We did, therefore, according to the best of our knowledge, receive and follow the advice of Mr. Wesley." In the letter of December 1, 1828, from which we have quoted, Ware says: "I am fully persuaded the preachers in 1784 believed they were acting in accordance with the will of Mr. Wesley, when they adopted the Episcopal form, or the plan of the General Superintendency." Mr. Ware, however, in this letter, concedes that in giving to that plan the

title of "Episcopal," the Conference violated Mr. Wesley's wish, for he says: "This plan we knew Mr. Wesley approved, and *we called it Episcopal. I did not believe Mr. Wesley wished us to give it that appellation.*" * This last statement of Mr. Ware may be accepted as proof that Dr. Coke did not misrepresent Mr. Wesley's views to the Conference respecting the use of the term "Episcopal."

William Phœbus, who was a member of the Christmas Conference, wrote a Defense of Methodist Ordination, in which he says that Wesley ordained Coke as "his apostle or messenger to us, with outlines of advice for us to adopt, as we saw most conducive to the general good, *recommending to us the New Testament for our pattern.*" Phœbus says, Wesley sent "outlines of *advice;*" Ware says, the Conference did receive and follow "the *advice* of Mr. Wesley;" Garrettson says, "*instructions were communicated* from Mr. Wesley." Respecting Coke's action, Phœbus says: "We assembled at the city of Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, and received Thomas Coke, LL.D., with his testimonials from the greatest man to *us* in the world. He proceeded to form the first Church that ever was organized under a pure republican government, and the first that was ever formed in this happy part of the world. In the year of our Lord 1785, and in the ninth year of the independence of the United States, on the first day of January, we thought it not robbery to call our society a Church, having in it, and of it, several presbyters and a President." †

William Watters, the first traveling preacher of American birth, was also a member of the General Conference of 1784. In regard to the understanding which the preachers had of Wesley's design respecting the organization of a Church, Watters says: "We formed ourselves

* The italics are mine.

† Quoted in Myles's "Chronological History of the People called Methodists," p. 165.

into a separate Church. This change was proposed to us by Mr. Wesley after we had craved his advice on the subject, but could not take effect until adopted by us; which was done in a deliberate, formal manner, at a Conference called for that purpose, in which there was not one dissenting voice. Every one, of any discernment, must see from Mr. Wesley's 'Circular Letter' on this occasion, as well as from every part of our mode of Church government, that we openly and avowedly declared ourselves Episcopalians, though the doctor and Mr. Asbury were called Superintendents." *

Watters here speaks of Wesley's "Circular Letter," but does not mention any other written instructions. Ware says this letter was read and analyzed by the Conference, but he does not say that any other written communication from Wesley was received. That famous "Circular Letter," then, dated Bristol, September 10, 1784, and addressed to "Dr. Coke, Francis Asbury, and our brethren in North America," contained the outline of advice which Phœbus says Wesley furnished, and the "advice," as Ware calls it, and the "instructions" mentioned by Garrettson. The letter says nothing about calling a Conference or organizing an independent Church; yet, read in the light of Coke's ordination and the provision of a creed and a liturgy by Wesley, it was, no doubt, interpreted by the preachers as authority for the construction of a Church of an Episcopal form. As Wesley did not anticipate a Conference, he wrote no directions for its guidance. Coke had not anticipated a General Conference, there is reason to believe, until he met Asbury, and so could not advise with Wesley respecting it. Therefore, with the instructions he received from Wesley, and the further light given him by Asbury and the American preachers, he did, it may be assumed, what to him seemed best in the exigencies of the situation. In

* Autobiography of Watters, p. 104.

the exercise of an embassador's discretionary power, he might innocently, perhaps, have exceeded Wesley's design by promoting the project of forming an independent Episcopal Church.

The truth of history, respecting this matter, appears to be: First. That Wesley, in ordaining Coke as General Superintendent and appointing Asbury to the same office, and in providing a creed and a liturgy, did propose a more distinctive ecclesiastical government for the American societies than they had previously enjoyed. Second. Mr. Wesley did not intend that that more formal government should lead to their severance from his authority as the chief ruler of Methodism, nor from "the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England." Third. Wesley did not anticipate the convening of a General Conference to consider his action, and, therefore, never wrote any instructions for such an assembly. He did appoint Coke and Asbury Superintendents, without suspecting that his appointments would be subjected to the ratification of a Conference. Fourth. Asbury refused to accept the superintendency from Wesley, and would only receive it from the preachers. Fifth. Upon consultation, in the presence of Coke and Asbury, several preachers agreed to call a General Conference in Baltimore, the 24th day of December, 1784. That Conference believed itself to be invested with full legislative powers, and competent to determine, by vote, what measures should be accepted and adopted for the government of the Methodists in America. Sixth. Had Mr. Asbury accepted the superintendency from Mr. Wesley without insisting upon the right of the preachers to elect superintendents, it is probable that a Conference would not have been called, and in that case a separate Church would not then have been formed by the American preachers. Seventh. The Conference deferred to Mr. Wesley's views, so far as they were understood. Accordingly, it adopted his plan

of a General Superintendency, which it made elective, and which it interpreted to mean an Episcopal form of Church government, and elected Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury to be the incumbents of the new office. Eighth. In the exercise of what the Christmas Conference believed to be its inherent legislative powers, it organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, thereby totally separating Methodism in America from the Church of England, and, as was soon shown, from the government of Mr. Wesley. Ninth. This particular action Mr. Wesley did not design nor desire, nor did he intend that his acts and "advice" should be so interpreted. When he became fully aware that the separation of the Societies in America from the Church of England and from his own jurisdiction was complete, he regretted the action of the Conference in that particular, and continued to be sorry for it until his death.

Notwithstanding the American Methodists were, by the Christmas Conference, divorced from all ecclesiastical relations with the Church of England, they did not, as has been shown, at once openly renounce, but acknowledged, submission to Mr. Wesley. The declaration at Baltimore of submission to him may have led him to think that the act of organizing the Church had less significance, in disjoining American Methodism from the Church of England and from his jurisdiction, than the Conference attached to it. If so, he soon learned what the Methodists in this country at once understood, in the language of one of the ablest leaders of the new Church: "From that time the Methodist societies in the United States became an independent Church, under the Episcopal mode and form of government, designing, professing, and resolving to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church, according to the advice of Mr. Wesley, and in perfect unison with the views, the opinions, and wishes of Mr. Asbury." *

* The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, "Sermon on Asbury," p. 109.

It seems clear that, having suffered during the Revolution from the publication of Mr. Wesley's political opinions, and from the course in that particular of the preachers he sent hither; and the independence of the United States having been established, and the necessity of adequate provision for the sacraments and a home government having been long and sorely felt, the American Methodists were inclined to organize an independent Church. All the testimony goes to show that the preachers who composed the Christmas Conference were unanimously and heartily in favor of that measure. It is also clear, that, whatever Wesley designed, they *understood* that such an organization was in accordance with his intention. As Americans, and American Christians and Methodists, there can be no doubt that it was their right to declare for a separate Church. Such a Church, formed by the preachers as the representatives of the societies, under the conditions by which they were convened in General Conference, and accepted by the people heartily and thankfully, as was done, was and is a true and valid Church of Jesus Christ. The American Methodists had the right and the power, under God, with or without the consent of Mr. Wesley, to establish the ecclesiastical fabric which they named the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Was Mr. Wesley satisfied with the organization and administration of the new Church? Asbury wrote to Benson, "I can truly say for one, that the greatest affliction and sorrow of my life was that our dear father, from the time of the Revolution to his death, grew more and more jealous of myself, and the whole American Connection; and that it appeared we had lost his confidence entirely." Mr. Asbury attributed Wesley's attitude toward him largely to Rankin. He says, "Dr. Coke said that as often as he [Wesley] went to see Diotrephes, [Rankin,] he came back with his mind strangely agitated and dissatisfied with the American Connection; and that he did not know what to do to put him

to rights." Pawson, one of the preachers Wesley sent to Scotland in 1785, in a letter quoted by Tyerman, says that Wesley, "a few months before his death, was so annoyed with Dr. Coke's conduct, in persuading the people to depart from the original plan, that he threatened in a letter to have no more to do with him, unless he desisted from such a procedure." *

There was trouble, also, with Vasey, whom Wesley sent to America with Coke. On July 28, 1787, Asbury reached Philadelphia, where he says, "Here I found T. V. [Vasey] had scattered firebrands and thrown dirt to bespatter us." A few days later he writes, "I find T. V. [Vasey] has misrepresented us as having cast off Mr. Wesley, making this a plea for his reordination." It seems evident that when the separate and independent organization of American Methodism became fully apparent to Wesley, and he found his authority over it had thereby ceased, his displeasure became manifest. He never designed to be other than the chief ruler of Methodism in the two hemispheres. He doubtless believed God had intrusted him with such authority, and that he was responsible to him for its exercise. The rejection of that authority by his children in America was to him a severe trial. The Methodist Episcopal Church wisely declared its independence, not only of the English Church, but also of the ecclesiastical control of Mr. Wesley. It was painful to know that this grieved the venerated Wesley, but it was inevitable.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, at and after the Baltimore Conference of the year 1787, was the Church of Asbury. At that Conference Dr. Coke was put within limits. He had, as was thought, carried his authority too far, and the preachers did not hesitate to restrain him. Concerning this transaction the Rev William Phœbus says: "The motion to remove his [Wesley's] name having a second, was debated and carried in the affirmative. They soon

* Tyerman's "Life of Wesley," vol, iii, p. 443.

turned their attention to his son, Coke, supposing his jurisdiction an imposition, as he would still possess the supreme rule, and it was feared that he would abuse that power. To prevent the abuse of it was talked of in a desultory and in a menacing way, till Dr. Coke, to free them from their fears, or pretended fears, said he would relinquish his power as Superintendent, so far as it respected supreme jurisdiction and supreme rule; and that he would claim no authority but to preside when Conference did convene; so he consented to become a mere moderator rather than to have his name left off the Minutes. Seeing they had prevailed so far, some asked more than his word; so he gave them his bond for the fulfilment of his promise." * The Conference thus accepted from Bishop Coke the following instrument:

"I do solemnly engage by this instrument that I never will, by virtue of my office as Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church during my absence from the United States of America, exercise any government whatever in the said Methodist Church during my absence from the United States. And I do also engage that I will exercise no privilege in the said Church when present in the United States, except that of ordaining, according to the regulations and law already existing or hereafter to be made in the said Church, and that of presiding when present in Conference, and lastly that of traveling at large. Given under my hand, the second day of May, in the year 1787.

"Thomas Coke.

"Witnesses: John Tunnell, John Haggerty, Nelson Reed."

In the next Minutes was the following insertion, "Who are the Superintendents of our Church for the United States? Thomas Coke, (when present in the States,) and

* "Memoirs of Whatcoat," by Phœbus, pp. 64, 65.

Francis Asbury." Here, for the first time, the name of Mr. Wesley is omitted.

Henceforth Francis Asbury was recognized as, what he had long in fact been, the governing mind of American Methodism. He was the Wesley of the New World. "I assume it as a fact," says one of his great contemporaries, "that Francis Asbury was the father of the system which goes under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Without his agency and influence it never would have been what it now is. Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke might have written, but their theories would have remained, in a great measure, a dead letter. The vast ability with which this great man presided over these elements was fully equaled by his sincerity. He had the utmost confidence in the plan as the best that could be devised to promote the work of God in this country."*

The Methodist Episcopal Church is, indeed, the product, in a large degree, of Asbury's brain and heart, and almost every part of its organism shows the touch of his masterful hand. Had he, like the other English preachers, left the country during the Revolution, it is doubtful whether this wonderful ecclesiastical structure would have risen. Upon it is impressed the mind, the zeal, and the amazing work of Francis Asbury. It stands as the mighty monument of his heroic devotion, and of his apostolic faith and labors.

* The Rev. Nicholas Snethen, "Wesleyan Repository," vol. iii, 1823, p. 75.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUPERINTENDENCY OR EPISCOPATE.

THE office of Superintendent, to which Mr. Wesley appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, was not different, except in one particular, from that of General Assistant, which was previously administered by Mr. Asbury and Mr. Rankin. The General Assistant did not possess the power of ordination, while the Superintendent was invested with that power.

The General Assistant was the deputy of Wesley. He bore an authority which, had he been in this country, Mr. Wesley would have personally executed. As he could not be here in person, he exercised his power, as the chief ruler of Methodism, first through Mr. Asbury, then Rankin, and again Asbury.

In appointing Superintendents, Mr. Wesley, so far as can be ascertained from his utterances, designed simply to provide the sacraments permanently for the American Methodists, by establishing a succession of ordained ministers among them. Except for this he would not have appointed Superintendents. The sacraments had been withheld so long, and the urgency of the growing cause with respect to them was so great, that Mr. Wesley knew that if he did not make provision for the exigency speedily, the preachers and societies would adopt measures for the administration of the ordinances independently of him, and that thus Methodism in the United States would be put beyond his jurisdiction. As he could not go to America to ordain, he delegated Coke for that purpose. With the new power of ordination with which it

was invested, the supervisory office was changed by Wesley from General Assistant to Superintendent. The Superintendent, in Wesley's view, was his personal agent, or embassador, and was so attested by the imposition of his hands, and by letters testimonial of that fact.

In the Church of England, to which Wesley and Coke adhered, the power to ordain belonged exclusively to the Episcopal order. None but a Bishop could confer ordination. Mr. Wesley came to see that the order of Presbyter and that of Bishop were the same. Hence, as a Presbyter of the Church, he conceived that he was entitled, in the exigencies that had risen, to exercise the prerogative which, according to the canons, appertained to the Episcopate alone. Thus he ordained Whatcoat and Vasey. He wrote in his Journal, September 1, 1784: "Being now clear in my own mind, I took a step, which I had long weighed in my mind, and appointed Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey to go and serve the desolate sheep in America." He likewise consecrated Coke to the Superintendency with a view to his ordaining preachers in the United States.

Now, in consecrating Dr. Coke to the office of Superintendent, did Mr. Wesley cling to any sacerdotal idea of Episcopacy, and make a Bishop? Dr. Coke seems to set forth that he did. Four and a half years after the Christmas Conference, there was inserted in the Discipline for the first time the following significant declaration, apparently written by Dr. Coke: "Preferring the Episcopal mode of Church government to any other, he [Wesley] solemnly set apart, by the imposition of his hands, and prayer, Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus College, in the University of Oxford, for the Episcopal office, and having delivered to him letters of Episcopal orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart Francis Asbury, then General Assistant of the

Methodist society in America, for the same Episcopal office."*

From all that appears in Wesley's utterances in relation to this matter, he did not intend to make Coke a Bishop. He, as an English Churchman, may have preferred the Episcopal *mode* or *form;* but it is far from clear that he meant to plant any thing but the *form* of Episcopacy in this country. He certainly did not mean to engraft its *substance* into the Methodism of the Western hemisphere. The utmost which episcopal theorists could justly claim in the light of Wesley's recorded utterances, was that he gave to America the form—the *body* of Episcopacy without the *spirit.* His simple purpose seems to have been to provide the holy sacraments for the numerous Methodists in the United States by means of a Presbyterial Superintendency.

Dr. Coke, in accepting from Wesley the power to ordain, desired and sought the imposition of Wesley's hands. This is apparent in the letter he wrote to Wesley, August 9, 1784, and which is inserted on pages 71 and 72 of this volume. How far Mr. Wesley was influenced by the importunity of Coke to lay hands upon him it is not possible to say. It is, however, clear that Coke saw that Wesley hesitated to ordain him, for otherwise he could have had no motive for writing such a letter. The ordination of Coke was not, as Wesley understood it, Episcopal, according to the ordinary signification of that term, but Presbyterial; and, as Coke's letter to Wesley suggests, it was apparently meant to provide against the criticisms and opposition which the exercise of the ordaining power by Coke might possibly provoke in America. Wesley's intimate

* "A form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Considered and Approved at a Conference held in Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, on Monday, the 27th of December, 1784, in which Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury presided." The Fifth Edition. New York. 1789, p. 4.

friend, the Rev. Henry Moore, says: "The doctor certainly needed all the influence and authority which Mr. Wesley could give him, and if he chose to give it to him according to the forms of the Church of England, which he loved, and which is so truly venerable, who has a right to find fault with him." *

Dr. Coke, with all his excellence, was not, as we shall hereafter see, altogether free from human weaknesses. He had a fondness for the word "Episcopal." He argued in the Christmas Conference that the Superintendency, to which Mr. Wesley set him apart by the imposition of hands, "was, in fact, *a species* of Episcopacy." He favored the adoption of the name, "Methodist *Episcopal* Church." John Dickins was freely consulted by Coke, and it is not improbable that he acted in accordance with Coke's expressed wish when he proposed that name in the Conference. The use of the word "Episcopal," as applied to the new Church, was in known opposition to the wish of Wesley, for Mr. Ware says: "I did not believe Mr. Wesley wished us to give it that appellation." †

In the earliest edition of the Discipline of 1784 the words Episcopal, Episcopacy, and Bishop did not appear, except that the word "Episcopal" appeared as a part of the name of the Church; nor did either of those words appear otherwise in the Minutes or the Discipline until more than two years subsequently.

There is no evidence that the word "Bishop" was used by the Conference which organized the Church. The Superintendency which Wesley provided was accepted and adopted. The two men whom he appointed to serve in that capacity were also elected and placed under the absolute control of the Conference. The new Church thus went forth with two General Superintendents at its head, but no Bishops. For Wesley did not appoint Bishops, nor

* Moore's "Life of Wesley."

† See Ware's statement, p. 77 of this volume.

did the Christmas Conference elect such officers. They were General Superintendents.

It appears, however, that, after a time, the Superintendents came to regard themselves as Bishops. Sometime in the year 1787 "Mr. Asbury reprinted the General Minutes, but in a different form from what they were before. The third question in the second section, and the answer, read thus:

"'*Q.* Is there any other business to be done in the Conference?

"'*A.* The electing and ordaining of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons.'

"This was the first time that our Superintendents ever gave themselves the title of Bishops in the Minutes. They changed the title themselves without the consent of the Conference, and at the next Conference they asked the preachers if the word '*Bishop*' might stand in the Minutes, seeing that it was a Scripture name, and the meaning of the word Bishop was the same as that of Superintendent.

"Some of the preachers opposed the alteration and wished to retain the former title; but a majority of the preachers agreed to let the word 'Bishop' remain, and in the Annual Minutes for the next year the first question is, 'Who are the Bishops of our Church for the United States?'

"In the third section of this form of Discipline, and in the sixth page, it is said, 'We have constituted ourselves into an Episcopal Church, under the direction of Bishops, Elders, Deacons, and Preachers, according to the form of ordination annexed to our prayer book, and the regulations laid down in this form of Discipline.' From that time the name of Bishop has been in common use among us, both in conversation and in writing." *

Such a notable procedure required explanation and

* Lee's "History of the Methodists," pp. 127, 128.

justification. Therefore a note was inserted in the Minutes as follows: "As the translators of our version of the Bible have used the English word *Bishop* instead of *Superintendent*, it has been thought by us that it would appear more scriptural to adopt their term, Bishop."

Thus, by the act of the Superintendents, and the subsequent ratification of that act by the Conference, the office of Superintendent, which originated with Mr. Wesley, was changed to that of Bishop. It has, indeed, been claimed that there was no change of the office; only of the name. Still the office now became widely recognized, as we shall soon see, as a Bishopric, with all that the word in its ecclesiastical usage implied; whereas, previously, it was known simply and only as a Superintendency.

Was Wesley indifferent to this change? By no means. On the contrary, his displeasure was shown in very plain if not sharp words, which he promptly addressed to Mr. Asbury. The letter is dated, London, September 20, 1788, and the portion of it which the Rev. Henry Moore, who was with Wesley when he wrote it, published, is as follows:

"There is, indeed, a vast difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans, and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am, under God, the father of the whole family. Therefore I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore I in a measure provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you he could not provide were it not for me—were it not that I, not only permit him to collect, but support him in so doing.

"But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the doctor and you differ from me. I study to be *little*, you study to be *great;* I *creep*, you *strut* along; I

found a school, you a *college*. Nay, and call it after your own names. O beware! Do not seek to be *something!* Let me be nothing, and Christ be all in all.

"One instance of this your greatness has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called a Bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men may call me a *knave* or a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me a *Bishop*. For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

"Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart; and let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely

"I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"John Wesley."

In the presence of such declarations, and of such an outburst of indignant affection, it would be uncandid to say that Mr. Wesley constituted Dr. Coke a Bishop, or that an Episcopate, in the established sense of that word, was the product of his brain and heart. All that he ever gave to the American Methodists, in this particular, was a simple Superintendency, subject to his guidance and control, and the tenure of which was limited by his pleasure. When it became other than that, it ceased to be the Superintendency of Wesley. Yet Dr. Coke in his Journal, published in Philadelphia, in 1789, said: "I ordained Brother Asbury a Bishop." *

The American Methodists had the power to adopt such regulations and to create such ecclesiastical officers as they chose. The substitution of the word "Bishop" for "Super-

* The word Bishop had but one signification in the Church of England, namely, that of a superior ecclesiastical order. As Coke did not here qualify the word, it conveyed the sense which its ancient usage gave to it.

intendent," though done by competent authority, was not approved by all the American preachers, any more than it was by Wesley. The devout and venerable Freeborn Garrettson, one of the most distinguished members of the Christmas Conference, wrote, in 1826: "Mr. Wesley gave us the word 'Superintendent,' instead of 'Bishop,' and the change of the word was cause of grief to that dear old saint, and so it was to me. Were it in my power to replace the word 'Superintendent,' it should be done."* It will be observed that the title of Bishop was not assumed by the Superintendents until after the declaration of submission to Wesley was expunged in 1787 by the Conference at Baltimore.

The fact that Mr. Wesley claimed the right to control the Superintendents, and to remove them from office at his will, and even to recall them to Europe, shows that he did not consider the office a regular Episcopate.† If Coke and Asbury were Bishops, by virtue of his will and act, then, in his own view, Wesley must have been a Bishop of Bishops or, in other words, an Archbishop, as it was his design that they should continue as they began, in subordination to him. Wesley expressly declared, however, that there should be no Archbishops among the Methodists.

When Mr. Wesley speaks for himself, in relation to his opinions or acts, his words carry higher authority than the words of any man whatsoever who undertakes to speak for him respecting the same matters. Therefore as between Dr. Coke's representations of Wesley's view of the Episcopate, and his own statement of his opinion thereof, the weight of authority is with Wesley. Coke, in his letter to Bishop White, said that Mr. Wesley did solemnly invest him, "so far as he had a right so to do, with Episcopal authority;" that is to say, he invested him to the extent that he could with a third ministerial order. In

* "Methodist Quarterly Review," vol. xii, 1830, p. 341.

† See p. 57 of this volume.

the Discipline, of the edition of 1789, as we have seen, he says that Wesley set him apart "for the Episcopal office," and delivered to him "letters of *Episcopal orders*." Wesley, on the contrary, declared that he believed the order of Presbyter and that of Bishop to be one and the same. As Coke was already a Presbyter, and Wesley believed in no higher order, he surely could not have thought of conferring upon him an Episcopal order. Yet Bishop White, as a Churchman, would understand Coke's use of the word "Episcopal," in the above statement addressed to him, to signify that Wesley tried, to the extent of his power, to make him a Bishop in the sense which that word, unexplained, carries; and Coke knew it would convey that significance to the Bishop.

In that biography of Wesley which is the product of the joint authorship of Coke and Moore, Dr. Coke does not claim to have received *Episcopal orders* from Mr. Wesley. In relation to this matter the following passage occurs: "At the Conference held in Leeds in 1784, he [Wesley] declared his intention of sending Dr. Coke and some preachers to America. Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey offered themselves as missionaries for that purpose, and were accepted. Before they sailed, Mr. Wesley abridged the Common Prayer-book of the Church of England, and wrote to Dr. Coke, then in London, desiring him to meet him in Bristol, to receive fuller powers, and to bring the Rev. Mr. Creighton with him. The doctor and Mr. Creighton accordingly met him in Bristol, where with their assistance he ordained Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey Presbyters for America; and being peculiarly attached to every rite of the Church of England, did afterward ordain Dr. Coke a Superintendent, giving him letters of ordination under his hand and seal." *

* "The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.," by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, London, 1792. This is not the same as Moore's "Life of Wesley," elsewhere quoted in these pages.

Between Coke's utterances and acts, and Wesley's words, there are apparent discrepancies which cannot be removed by accepting the hypothesis that Coke had a clear understanding of the views and intentions of his chief. Coke declares explicitly that he made Asbury a Bishop at the Christmas Conference in 1784. We repeat his words: 'I ordained Brother Asbury a Bishop." * He also says: "Brother Asbury has so high an opinion of Mr. Otterbein, that we admitted him at Brother Asbury's desire to lay his hands on Brother Asbury with us when he was ordained a Bishop." † Coke's relation to Wesley was such, that his claim that he ordained Asbury a Bishop implied that he did so by the authority conferred upon him by Wesley's hands. Wesley wrote Asbury after the word "Bishop" superseded that of "Superintendent" in the Minutes: "How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called a Bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought." If Wesley contemplated an Episcopate, and considered Asbury a Bishop, by virtue of Coke's ordination, it is inexplicable that he should have shuddered at his being designated by the name. The thing and the name belong of right to each other.

The Rev. Henry Moore who was the close friend of Mr. Wesley, says: "With respect to the title of Bishop, I know that Mr. Wesley enjoined the doctor and his associates, in the most solemn manner, that it should not be taken. In this and in every similar deviation I cannot be the apologist of Dr. Coke." ‡ In answering a letter from the Rev. Charles Wesley, censuring him for ordaining, Mr. Wesley said: "I firmly believe I am a scriptural *episcopos*, as much as any man in England or in Europe." To which

*Coke's Journal in Philadelphia "Arminian Magazine," 1789, p. 291. It is observed that in the volume of his Journal, which was published in London in 1793, Coke does not use this expression. Indeed, in that book there is no allusion at all to the ordination of Asbury.

† Philadelphia "Arminian Magazine," 1789, p. 291.

‡ Moore's "Life of Wesley."

Charles replied: "That you are a scriptural *episcopos*, or overseer, I do not dispute, and so is every minister who has the care of souls." Mr. Moore says: "He gave to those *episcopoi* whom he ordained, the modest, but highly expressive title of *Superintendents*, and desired that no other might be used." *

The declaration of Mr. Wesley, in his letter of September 13, 1785, to his brother Charles, that Coke "has done nothing rashly, that I know," has been confidently quoted to refute the allegation that at the Christmas Conference Coke exceeded the authority with which Wesley invested him. Had Mr. Wesley then known that Coke claimed that he ordained Asbury a Bishop, would he thus have exculpated him from the charge of rashness? "I can state," says the Rev. Henry Moore, "that Mr. Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things; nor was he the author of one line of all that Dr. Coke published in America on this subject. His views on these points were very different from those of his zealous son in the Gospel. He knew that a work of God neither needed, nor could be truly aided, nor could recommend itself to pious minds, by such additions." †

The word "Bishop" having been substituted for Wesley's term "Superintendent," it carried with it the idea that the office of Bishop was *more* than an "office;" that in fact it was a separate and superior ministerial "*order*." This could scarcely have been otherwise, in view of the current significance of the word; but such a result would not have followed had Wesley's word "Superintendent" been retained, and the word "Bishop," as he requested and insisted, been discarded.

Previous to the General Conference of 1792 the Rev. Thomas Morrell held forth the third order theory, in his reply to Hammett's attack upon the Church. He said: "In our ordination office we have the manner in which

* Moore's "Life of Wesley." † Moore's "Life of Wesley."

each of these three orders are to be ordained, the questions to be asked, and the reply they are each to make. Distinct ordination proves a different degree of order."

At the General Conference of 1796 the logical outcome of the previous transactions of the Superintendents and preachers, in relation to Episcopacy, became manifest by the sacramental theory of the office assuming a degree of tangibleness. In that Conference it was moved that an addition of one be made to the Episcopacy. The Rev. William Phœbus says: "The question before the house was, 'If Francis Asbury's seat as Superintendent be vacated by death, or otherwise, was Dr. Coke considered, from the authority he had in the Church, as having a right to take the Superintendency in the same manner as it was exercised by Francis Asbury?' Dr. Coke was then asked, if he would be ready to come to the United States and reside there, if he were called to take the charge as Superintendent, so that there might be a succession from Wesley. He agreed, as soon as he should be able to settle his charge in Europe, with all pleasure and possible dispatch to come and spend his days in America.* The Rev. Superintendent Asbury then reached out his right hand in a pathetic speech, the purport of which was: 'Our enemies said we were divided, but all past grievances were buried, and friends at first, are friends at last, and I hope never to be divided.'

"The doctor took his right hand in token of submission, while many present were in tears of joy to see the happy

*Dr. Coke's agreement, at the General Conference of 1796, is as follows:

"I offer myself to my American brethren entirely to their service, all I am and have, with my talents and labors in every respect; without any mental reservation whatsoever, to labor among them, and to assist Bishop Asbury; *not to station the Preachers at any time when he is present*, but to exercise all Episcopal duties, when I hold a Conference in his absence, *and by his consent*, and to visit the West Indies and France, when there is an opening, and I can be spared.

"Signed, THOMAS COKE.

"CONFERENCE ROOM, BALTIMORE, *October*, 27, 1796."

union in the heads of department, and from a prospect of the Wesleyan Episcopacy being likely *to continue in regular order and succession.*" *

According to Phœbus this view of the Episcopacy had further confirmation and demonstration in the succeeding General Conference. Phœbus says: "At a General Conference in 1800 a resolution passed to strengthen the Episcopacy by adding a third. There were two principal candidates in nomination. But such as thought correctly perceived that it could not be strengthened if one should be joined to it who was not convinced that such an order was apostolic. He would see no necessity to submit to such an ordination, nor to defend it if he thought it not divine, any more than he would to pray fervently and devoutly for the dead, while he did not think purgatory a doctrine of the Bible. A man who did not believe in three orders in the ministry would weaken the Episcopacy. Such was one of the nominated, as may be seen by the memoirs of the Rev. Jesse Lee.

"Richard Whatcoat had thought it an honor to be ordained a deacon, as St. Stephen was; and an elder, as the Seventy; and had magnified both orders, and was a warm advocate for the third; esteeming it *not an office* taken at pleasure, *but an order of God.*" †

That this high view of the Episcopate was shared by Asbury, there seems to be little reason for doubt. Within a year after the election of Whatcoat, in allusion to the Methodist Episcopacy, Asbury said: "There is not, nor, indeed, in my mind, can there be, a perfect equality between a constant President, and those over whom he always presides."‡

In the year 1805 Asbury said: "I will tell the world what I rest my authority upon. 1. Divine authority.

* "Memoirs of Whatcoat," by Phœbus, p. 84. The italics are mine.

† "Memoirs of Whatcoat." The italics are mine.

‡ Asbury's "Journal," vol. iii, p. 19.

2. Seniority in America. 3. The election of the General Conference. 4. My ordination by Thomas Coke, William Philip Otterbein, German Presbyterian minister, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey. 5. Because the signs of an apostle have been seen in me." *

It is clear, then, that Asbury attached a certain value to his ordination as Superintendent by Coke, and that he rested his authority upon that *ordination* as well as on his election by the Christmas Conference.

This high theory of Methodist Episcopacy found expression as late as 1827 in the "Methodist Magazine." In what is apparently an editorial review in that journal of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson's semi-centennial sermon, the following words occur: "At the same time that our Church does not subscribe to the *essentiality* of this order of ministers [Bishops] it certainly recognizes it as superior to and different from the office of elder."†

As late as July, 1871, the same theory had editorial advocacy in the "Methodist Quarterly Review," which said: "The office conferred upon Dr. Coke had all the attributes ascribed to an order: namely, ordination, exclusive right to ordain, life tenure, and successional permanence in the future." The Quarterly further said: "Are not our Bishops consecrated by the most solemn of the three ordinations? How can there be an ordination, if not to an order?"

Respecting the life tenure of Dr. Coke the Quarterly was mistaken. The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson says: "The fears arising in the minds of many of the members of this Conference [1787] lest Mr. Wesley should recall Mr. Asbury, was the cause of R. Whatcoat's appointment being rejected."‡ Mr. Asbury, as we have seen, expressly declared that Wesley claimed the right to govern the Superintendents, to the extent of removing them from office, and

* "Journal," vol. iii, p. 191. † "Methodist Magazine," 1827, p. 399.
‡ Garrettson's Semi-Centennial Sermon, p. 20.

recalling them from the country.† Nothing seems to have been said by Mr. Wesley concerning a life tenure of the Superintendency.

Notwithstanding that the theory of the Episcopacy as a separate and higher order had large acceptance in the Church, the General Conference treated the Bishops as if they were simply Superintendents. They were held as subject to suspension, or to deposition from office, at the will of the General Conference. This fact is shown by the course taken by the General Conference of 1796 and that of 1808 respecting Dr. Coke.

In relation to Dr. Coke's agreement at the General Conference of 1796, to devote himself exclusively to the work of his office as Bishop, in the United States, to which reference has been made already, the Rev. John Kobler, who was a member of that body, says:

"This unexpected offer, and to many an unwelcome one, opened the way to a large and spirited debate. A number present were warmly in favor of accepting the offer, and as many were against it. Mr. Lee was decidedly against, and he warmly opposed it. In fact, I believe he never liked the doctor any way, from his first entering among us in 1784, to the last. He could not endure the absolute spirit and overbearing disposition of Dr. Coke, as a high officer in the Church. Mr. Lee was a candid man, and in no wise disposed to give flattering titles to any, and as such he opposed the offer with great zeal and eloquence. He was a man of great penetration, could see through circumstances, and read men well. He was the best speaker in the Conference. He first showed that there were several members in our Connection who were well qualified to fill the office, having been long and well proved; who were natives of the country, of ourselves, and were well acquainted with the rules by which our civil and religious privileges were regulated. But his

* See page 57.

most powerful argument, I well remember, was this: 'that the doctor was a thorough-bred Englishman, and an entire stranger abroad in the country; (*out* of the Church;) that the deep-rooted prejudices against British oppression, which by our arduous Revolutionary struggle we had so recently thrown off, still hung heavily, and was operating powerfully upon the public mind; and that to select a high officer to govern our Church from that distant nation, whose spirit and practice were held in abhorrence by the American people, would in his judgment be a very impolitic step, and would tend to raise the suspicions and prejudices of the public against us as a Church. He further said, he had frequently heard the same objections made against us as an American Church for having a native of England (Bishop Asbury) at our head; and now to add another, who, in many respects, had not the experience, prudence, nor skill in government that Bishop Asbury had, would operate very materially against the best interest of the Church.'

"The debate lasted two days, and was incessant; and during the time the doctor was secluded from the Conference room. Mr. Lee and his party evidently had the better of the cause in debate, and was gaining confidence continually. In one of his speeches, Mr. Lee said he was 'confident the doctor would not fill the high office, and perform the vast amount of labor attached to it; that England was his home, his friends and best interests were there, and without doubt he would spend most of his time in going to and fro between England and America, and leave the Episcopacy and the Connection as void of help as they were before.' When Bishop Asbury saw how the matter was likely to go, he rose from the chair, and with much apparent feeling said: 'If we reject him, it will be his ruin; for the British Conference will certainly know of it, and it will sink him vastly in their estimation.' Here the debate ended. I well remember, during the debate, the

doctor came into Conference and made a speech. Among other things he said, he 'never was cast upon such a sea of uncertainty before.' This, I expect, made Bishop Asbury say, '*If we reject him, it will be his ruin.*' The discussion was now stopped, and the whole matter submitted (though by many with reluctance) to Bishop Asbury's judgment—for they had, previously to the doctor's offer, urged him to make his own selection.* I have often wondered at Bishop Asbury's implicit confidence in Dr. Coke. Whether he felt himself bound, in conscience, to submit to one who ordained him to the office of Superintendent, or whether it was because he was Mr. Wesley's representative, I am at a loss to say. But the doctor's conduct, in a short time, fully proved that Mr. Lee's opinions of his course were founded in a wise discrimination of character—for in a few months he went to England, and never appeared among us till four years afterward!" †

The Rev. William Colbert was a member of the General Conference of 1796. He made a brief record in his Journal of the action of the Conference respecting Dr. Coke. From Mr. Colbert's language it would seem that the question whether Coke's offer should be accepted was determined by vote. Mr. Colbert's statement is of the date of Friday, October 28, and is as follows: "Yesterday there was much talk about another Bishop, and in the afternoon Dr. Coke made an offer of himself. It was not determined whether they would receive him. But to-day I suppose there were not a dozen out of a hundred that rejected him by their votes. This gave me satisfaction." ‡

Thus it is clear that the General Conference of 1796 believed that Bishop Coke was, as a Bishop, subject to

* The General Conference of 1796 proposed to give Bishop Asbury the man whom he would name as his associate in the Superintendency.

† Letter of the Rev. John Kobler to the Rev. Dr. Le Roy M. Lee. "Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee."

‡ Journal of the Rev. William Colbert in manuscript.

such disposition as it should determine to make of him; and apparently Asbury felt that it was necessary to interpose with his influence, as the father of the Connection, in behalf of his colleague.

Dr. Coke, previous to the General Conference of 1808, he being at the time in Europe, published a circular letter, in which he gave certain conditions upon which he would consent to return permanently to the United States. His correspondence with Bishop White had, meanwhile, been published, and had given considerable offense.* Coke wrote a letter to the General Conference, giving an explanation of that correspondence, and also restating, in a modified form, the conditions upon which he would be willing to return, finally, to this country. He then says: "If this cannot be done by the authority of the General Conference, you may insert me in your Minutes as formerly; or you may insert the resident Bishop or Bishops, and add a N. B.: Dr. Coke (or Bishop Coke, as you please) resides in Europe, till he be called to the States by the General Conference, or by the Annual Conferences; or if this be not agreeable, you must expel me, (for dropping me out of your public Minutes will be, to all intents and purposes, an expulsion,) and leave what I have done for your Connection to God alone; and though you forget me, God will not forget me."

In regard to this subject, the Conference gave its deliverance as follows: "*Resolved*, That Dr. Coke's name shall be retained in our Minutes after the names of our Bishops in a N. B. Dr. Coke, at the request of the British Conference, and by consent of our General Conference, resides in Europe. He is not to exercise the office of Superintendent among us, in the United States, until he be recalled by the General Conference, or by all the Annual Conferences respectively."

With respect to this case, a high authority in American Methodism has said: "It is manifest that the General Con-

* Concerning Coke's letter to Bishop White, see p. 348 of this volume.

ference of 1808 had no doubt as to its right to suspend Dr. Coke, one of its Bishops, during its pleasure; for the resolution does not only forbid him to exercise the functions of a Superintendent over the Methodist Episcopal Church while he continued to reside in Europe, but until *recalled*. He might have come to America at any time; but he could not reinstate himself in the Episcopate, without he should be again called to it, either by vote of the General Conference, or by all the Annual Conferences. Nor did the Conference proceed by impeachment, or upon any specific charge of immorality, or violation of disciplinary rule. The action of the body was simply prudential. The interests of the Church, under all the circumstances, required a suspension of Dr. Coke's authority, as one of the Bishops, and the Conference suspended him; and that, too, until a contingency occurred which might never happen, and which, in fact, never did happen; for he never was recalled. The action of the Conference was, to all intents and purposes, a deposition of the Bishop, though it was so expressed as to give him as little offense as possible.

"A remarkable circumstance in this affair is, that Dr. Coke himself, so far from questioning the right of the General Conference to dispose of him as it pleased, clearly and explicitly admits the right; for all his propositions are founded upon this admission.

"Thus it will be seen, that the Discipline of the Church, as explained by all commentators throughout our whole history, and as acted upon by the General Conference, where such action was called for, established the right of the General Conference to depose or suspend a General Superintendent, for any cause which that body may believe renders that deposition or suspension necessary, without the process of trial or impeachment."*

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," T. E. Bond and G. Coles, Editors. Editorial article, August 14, 1844.

This power was asserted by the General Conference of 1844 in the case of Bishop Andrew, who, by his marriage, had become a slave-holder. A majority of the General Conference believed that that fact incapacitated him for the successful discharge of the functions of his office. The following resolution respecting Bishop Andrew was, therefore, passed by that body:

"*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains."

Of this action the biographer of Bishop Andrew affirms: "Since he could not conscientiously remove the impediments, it amounted to permanent deposition." *

The first Bishops, Coke and Asbury, in their Notes on the Discipline, acknowledged their subjection to the General Conference. They said: "The American Bishops are as responsible as any of the preachers. They are perfectly subject to the General Conference." Again they said: "They [the Bishops] are perfectly dependent. Their power, their usefulness, themselves, are entirely at the mercy of the General Conference."

Whatever theories of a third order may have been entertained in the Church, the General Conference has, we repeat, governed the incumbents of the Episcopate as if it were simply an office. It has treated the Bishops as its agents, or embassadors, even as Wesley treated the Superintendents he appointed, Coke and Asbury. It has always held them subordinate to its will. At a very early period of the Church the Rev. John Dickins said: "Mr. Asbury was chosen by the Conference, both before and after he was ordained a Bishop; and he is still considered as the person of its choice by being responsible to the Conference, which has power to remove him and fill his place with another,

* "The Life and Letters of James Osgood Andrew." By the Rev. George G. Smith, A.M. Nashville, 1883.

if it sees necessary. And as he is liable every year to be removed, he may be considered as their annual choice." * It has even been maintained, that for an abuse of the appointing power, a Bishop may be deposed by the General Conference.

The power to appoint the preachers to their fields of labor is the most delicate and sacred of all the powers which the General Conference wields. It executes that power through deputies, or embassadors, whom it calls Bishops. It cannot but hold the Bishops, therefore, to a strict responsibility for the manner in which they administer that high authority which it confides to them. Should an officer to whom the power of appointing the ministers has been intrusted, by the General Conference, become careless, reckless, or oppressive in its exercise, it would clearly be necessary for the General Conference to divest him of that power. Should it fail to do so, it would prove an unfaithful guardian of the most sacred interests and rights of the Church and of the ministry. An incompetent or an untrustworthy Bishop might do immeasurable injury to the cause he is designed to conserve. From such injury the General Conference is solemnly bound to protect the Church.

The eminent authority, from whose editorial we have quoted already, in the same sagacious article, says: "Suppose a Bishop, in the legitimate exercise of his prerogative, to appoint a preacher in the Georgia Conference to a circuit in Wisconsin. There is no general rule why a preacher in Georgia should not be sent to Wisconsin; but in the case supposed there is a special objection. The preacher lacks the pecuniary means to transport himself and family to the field of labor assigned him. He remonstrates, and states his inability to comply with the order; but the Bishop is inexorable, and refuses to revoke it. The preacher does not go to Wisconsin—it is impracticable; but he remains

* Quoted by Emory in "Defense of our Fathers," p. 65.

without a circuit or station for a whole year, and, consequently, without any claim upon the Discipline for support. He is, therefore, compelled to go in debt for food, raiment, and shelter, both for himself and those that are dependent upon him.

"At the ensuing General Conference, the injured preacher lays his complaint before the Committee on the Episcopacy, and a charge is preferred against a Bishop for oppressing a brother. Could the charge be sustained? Would not the Bishop plead his legal right to make the appointment, and the entire absence of any rule of Discipline which required him to adjust his appointments to the convenience of the preachers? Might he not plead that the whole system of Methodism required personal sacrifices; and, in his judgment, the interests of the circuit in Wisconsin would have been greatly promoted by the services of the complainant? Could the General Conference convict a Bishop of either immorality or a breach of Discipline in the premises? And if not, where is the remedy for this evil? The answer is, that upon a statement of the facts in the case, by the Committee on the Episcopacy, the General Conference would decide whether or not the act of the Bishop was improper; and, if improper, whether his removal from office was necessary. Without this direct responsibility to the Conference, and subjection to deposition by vote of the body for improper conduct, if thought necessary, there could be no security against the most cruel oppression of the traveling preachers by a Bishop; and that strictly according to law." *

This view of the subjection of the Bishops to the General Conference really places the Superintendency where Wesley put it. It is not a prelatical order, but a simple agency or embassy employed for the purpose of executing

* Editorial article in the "Christian Advocate and Journal," August 14, 1844, from the pen, it is presumed, of the Editor-in-chief, Dr. Bond.

the will of the body from which it bears authority, and to which it is always and directly responsible.

After a century, in which the question of the precise ecclesiastical *status* of the Methodist Superintendency has been the target of many controversial arrows, the first Centennial of the Church was signalized by an action of the General Conference of 1884, declaring that the Episcopate is not an order, but an office, in the words following, to wit:

"*Resolved*, That we reaffirm the doctrine of the fathers of our Church, that the Bishopric is not an order, but an office; and that in orders a Bishop is merely an Elder or Presbyter."

This resolution was written and moved by the Rev. Dr. T. B. Neely, of the Philadelphia Conference, who also supported it in an elaborate speech. There was a motion to refer it to the Committee on the Episcopacy, which did not prevail. The resolution, after being fully discussed, without any member disputing the truth of its declaration, was adopted by a very large majority. Subsequently, the Rev. Dr. Daniel Curry, of the New York East Conference, moved the adoption of a rubric on the same subject, for insertion in the Discipline. Dr. Neely made the main speech in support of Dr. Curry's motion, and it prevailed by an almost unanimous vote. This last action embraced the following:

"*Resolved*, That these words be inserted as a rubric at the beginning of the ritual for the consecration of Bishops:

"[This service is not to be understood as an ordination to a higher Order in the Christian Ministry, beyond and above that of Elders or Presbyters, but as a solemn and fitting Consecration for the special and most sacred duties of Superintendency in the Church.]"

Thus by the latest and decisive utterance of the Church, the Methodist Superintendency is stripped of all the prelatical ideas and theories with which it has been confused

since its title was changed in 1787; and the Episcopate of the Methodist Episcopal Church is declared, in effect, to be nothing more than the simple Superintendency which was originally received and accepted from John Wesley at the Christmas Conference, in the closing days of 1784. In Methodist phraseology, the word "Superintendent" means Bishop, and the word "Bishop" means Superintendent. These two are one. In common ecclesiastical language the word "Bishop," of course, signifies one who is invested with an order superior to that of Presbyter. This meaning of the word the Methodist Episcopal Church does not accept, but rejects. Its Bishops are Presbyterial Superintendents; "only that, and nothing more."

CHAPTER V.

ADVANCE OF THE NEW CHURCH FROM BALTIMORE.

WITH the beginning of the year 1785, the Methodist Episcopal Church began its great career of labor and achievement. Having about eighty ministers and scarcely fifteen thousand members, it entered with high ardor and hope upon the work of spreading scriptural holiness over this great land. Greatly gratified that they were now a Church, the American Methodists, both of the laity and of the ministry, pursued their high calling in Christ Jesus with a sense of freedom from embarrassment which they had not previously known.

The itinerancy was now fully organized. Asbury, the most redoubtable warrior of the Cross that ever led the hosts of God in America, was a perpetual inspiration to his preachers. His absolute devotion to his Master's work; his prudence, wisdom, and skill in leadership; his zeal and ability in the pulpit; his vigilant and energetic supervision of all the interests of his great charge, rendered him an example and a living benediction to the young Church.

The new Church also enjoyed an unexampled opportunity. Before it was a vast country that had escaped from the old political bonds, and from the sway of a foreign scepter. The Revolution had swept away the English State Church. Other denominations had not yet entered the field south of Pennsylvania to any considerable extent, and the great West was yet almost in its virgin solitude. The war, besides securing a new government for America, opened a highway for Methodism. Dromgoole wrote from Virginia to Wesley seven months before the Christmas

Conference, "There is now a great and effectual door opened, and a blessed prospect of great good being done." Such was the revulsion which the war gave to the English Church that Bishop White, in his Half-Century Address, said that in all the State of Pennsylvania there was at one time no rector of the Church of England but himself.

American Methodism, by its organization, was separated from the Church of England, and yet escaped competition with it. Instead of having to struggle against the powerful influence of the mother Church, the Methodists found the field almost vacant and inviting their occupancy. "The Methodist Episcopal Church never had to contend with the Protestant Episcopal Church, as with an older rival who had previous possession. She was not like an infant struggling with a Hercules. She had the wide country before her where to choose, and Providence her guide." Whitefield, by his great zeal and eloquence, had stirred the country, but he confined his labors to the populous territory, and gave little attention to the new rural regions.

The young Church, with its itinerant ministry, was not slow to take advantage of its great opportunity. Asbury led his itinerants over mountains, across rivers, and through the valleys of the new States. Had the great advantages which he and his preachers possessed for extending the Church been unimproved, the loss would have been irretrievable. "The neglected ground would have been occupied by others. Excepting a part of the Middle and Eastern States, Methodism takes rank with other denominations in the order of time." The advantages, instead of being wasted, were marvelously improved. On the opening of the year 1785, the Methodist Episcopal Church went forth from Baltimore to the conquest of the continent.

At once the cause felt a new impulse. At Baltimore, and in the country around it, the work of God revived. The

quarterly meetings, at which the sacraments were administered, became occasions of great interest and usefulness. The people attended them in multitudes, and felt the solemnity of a Divine Presence. Dr. Coke visited the peninsula, and the entire region was moved. "Thousands," says Ware, "pressed to him to have their children dedicated to the Lord in baptism, and to receive themselves the holy supper at his hands. Daily accessions were made to the Church."

After the Conference adjourned, Asbury began preparation for a journey southward. On the sixth of January he was in Virginia, on his way to Charleston. In February he was in the metropolis of the South, having with him two of his most talented preachers, Henry Willis and Jesse Lee. On the twenty-seventh day of that month Lee preached to a very small congregation. Willis followed in the afternoon with a sermon, and Lee preached again at night. This was the formal beginning of Methodism in Charleston.

While in the city, Asbury and his companions were the guests of a merchant named Edgar Wells. He was a well-disposed man of the world. Though not without serious reflections, he was a lover of pleasure more than of God. Asbury was instant in season, out of season, and wherever he was he sought to save souls. He became greatly anxious for the salvation of his gentlemanly host. On the first evening that they were entertained at his house, the preachers proposed prayers while Wells was preparing to go to a scene of gayety. "Prayers in my house," he thought. "If I attend I must disappoint myself and others of the pleasures of the evening; for I cannot go to a dance after prayer." *

The merchant observed the deportment of his visitors, and was favorably and strongly impressed by their example and counsel. As they sat at dinner one day, Mr.

* "The Methodist Magazine," 1797. Philadelphia.

Asbury said to Willis: "We may as well leave Charleston, for I don't know whether there are any in the city that love or fear God." The remark struck Mr. Wells. After some further conversation the ministers retired to their room, and their host remained to ponder their words. He then and there determined to seek God. He thought, "Surely this is the time; if I neglect this opportunity I may never have another." He made known to the preachers his state of mind. They prayed with him. Asbury writes: "This afternoon Mr. Wells began to feel conviction. My soul praised the Lord for this fruit of our labors—this answer to our prayers." The next day was Sunday. The seeker and his spiritual instructors were increasingly in earnest for his salvation. Asbury on that day exclaimed: "My soul is in deep travail for Mr. Wells." In the evening of the fifth day of his seeking, as he lay upon his bed, "engaged in mighty prayer, he found an inward power infused into his soul through which he was enabled to believe with the heart in the Lord Jesus Christ." Mr. Wells now rejoiced "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Asbury, in recording the fact of his conversion, says: "Now we know that God hath brought us here, and have a hope that there will be a glorious work among the people."

Mr. Wells became a devoted and useful member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was soon organized in Charleston, and he gave liberally to its funds. For almost twelve years he enjoyed and exemplified the faith that overcometh, exhibiting a character of rare loveliness. He was an earnest worker in the vineyard. In death he was victorious. He said: "As to the fear of death, I feel none; and as to eternity, I have with as much pleasure longed for my dissolution as ever I longed for my marriage day." His stricken widow wrote: "I asked him, 'Do you know who is with you?' He answered with a smile, 'Yes, my dear, I know God is with

me, and you are with me.' His heart and tongue seemed so engaged as I had never seen or heard before. It was the language of Canaan, and his happy spirit had already joined in converse with the celestial company." Thus triumphed over the last foe Edgar Wells, one of the earliest trophies of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He died in Charleston, January 16, 1797. It is said of him that he was "ever ready for all the duties of piety," and that in his domestic relations he had few equals. Such was the work which the newly consecrated Superintendent, Asbury, and his itinerant band went forth to do after the Christmas Conference.

After spending about a fortnight in Charleston, Asbury departed from the city, leaving as the fruit of his visit one important convert, and others "under gracious impressions." He appointed Willis to remain in the field and gather the sheaves.

Difficulties were to be overcome. Asbury and his companions had been permitted to occupy an unused Baptist church in Charleston. Soon it was closed against the new denomination. In June, 1785, Beverly Allen, then one of the most commanding preachers of Methodism, entered Charleston. "The field," he says, "seemed white unto the harvest. Both in the city and country the people were ready to hear the word." He joined Willis in his labors, and also preached in the regions around. "But the devil," says he, "could not bear to see his prey taken from him, for in a very short time he stirred up the wicked to spread all manner of falsehood abroad; and in some measure gained his point. The people became almost afraid to hear us, lest they should be infected with Methodism, which they deemed as dangerous as the plague." *

Excluded from the Baptist meeting-house, a Lydia, one Mrs. Stoll, received the Methodists into her house, where

* Allen's account of the "Work of God in America." "Arminian Magazine," 1792, p. 350.

they worshiped. The increased attendance soon made it necessary to find a larger place. A new, but unfinished, house was offered them by a friend, which they accepted.* While they were worshiping in this house a very striking conversion occurred. A man named George Airs, of confirmed habits of sin and of impulsive temperament, was awakened. For some days he was in distress for his sins. When he found deliverance he declared to those present that he was saved, and then bounded forth in rapture. He ran in the street, shouting halleluiah as he went. A crowd followed him, supposing he was insane. After running around several squares of the city, he returned to his home with tears streaming from his eyes. His subsequent life proved that he was not the victim of a wild delusion.† Such was the progress of the work, that when Asbury visited Charleston, in January, 1786, he found large congregations, and the people "encouraged to undertake the building of a meeting-house." When, on the first of March, 1787, Dr. Coke reached Charleston, he found a church which he opened for worship. "From that time," he says, "my congregations were very large. At five in the morning about three hundred used to attend." Asbury reached the city a fortnight or more later, and found "a spacious house," and "crowded and solemn" congregations.

The new church stood on Cumberland Street, and is yet memorable for the spiritual victories that honored it. Its erection was a triumph. "As there are no more than forty whites here in society," writes Coke, "the building of a church worth £1,000 sterling has filled the people with amazement." At this time the Conference assembled there. The preachers gathered together from South Carolina and Georgia, and reported the progress of the cause. "Great has been the work of God," says Coke, "both in this State and that of Georgia, for the little

* The Rev. James O. Andrew, "Methodist Quarterly Review," 1830, p. 18.
† Mood's "Methodism in Charleston."

time that we have labored in them." Thus, in two years from the entrance of Asbury and his two itinerants into the Southern metropolis, the young Church was not only securely established within it, but also extended over a large contiguous territory.

Henry Willis, whose work in Charleston, in 1785, is invested with so much interest and historical importance, was one of the most eminent ministers of early Methodism in America. A native of Brunswick County, Virginia, he entered the itinerancy during the Revolution. From the year 1779 to 1790 he rendered invaluable service. After that time he suffered from impaired health. He had an open, pleasant, smiling countenance, and possessed extraordinary gifts. "Henry Willis stood pre-eminent," says Thomas Ware. "Henry Willis was a light in the Church for many years," said Freeborn Garrettson. A Continental officer, Jacob Barr, who had little sympathy with religion, was led, by curiosity, to hear Willis preach in South Carolina. The sermon resulted in the thorough awakening and conversion of the soldier, and he became a very successful local preacher.* Willis was one of the early heroes, abounding in toil, fortitude, and achievement. His labors extended to Tennessee, to Charleston, and to New York. Coke, who witnessed his labors and knew his worth, said of him that he was "indeed an honor to the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour;" and, visiting his grave, Asbury exclaimed, "Henry Willis! Ah, when shall I look upon thy like again!" He died in triumphant faith at Pipe Creek, Md., in 1808.

The work was extended in Virginia, in 1785, by the formation of a new circuit, called Lancaster, which comprised the northern neck. About the whole State was now included in Methodist circuits. As Dr. Coke was traveling in this region this year, he illustrated how the early Methodist preachers reaped by sowing beside all waters. He

* Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina."

called at a house whose inmates were not acquainted with Methodism. Before leaving he presented the family with an extract of Law's "Treatise on the Nature and Design of Christianity." Six years afterward he met a preacher named Cowles, who, he says, "is a flame of fire," and who was a member of the family that received the tract. "By the means of that tract," writes Coke, "they were so stirred up to seek the Lord, that now the mother, the preacher, six children who are married, and their husbands and wives, fourteen in all, are converted, and have joined our society." By such facts the Methodists learned the value of the press as an auxiliary of the pulpit, and they skillfully employed it. The printed page was a silent helper of the traveling preacher, and preached when he was gone, with an effectiveness that told upon the destinies of the rising Church.

In this year, 1785, Beverly Allen formed the Great Pee Dee Circuit, in the State of North Carolina, "where," he says, "many hundreds flocked to hear the word of the Lord, and many were truly awakened."

In the autumn Allen preached at the house of a Colonel Jackson, in North Carolina. Many of his hearers were moved, and, in particular, two of the daughters of his host and their aunt, who was the wife of a judge of the Supreme Court. In the night their cries of anguish banished slumber. "We arose," says Allen, "and continued in prayer and exhortation till near two o'clock, when God heard our petitions and sent the Comforter."

During his progress in North Carolina, Allen "had crowded assemblies, and many were deeply wrought upon." At Governor Casewell's request, he preached at Newbern, before the Governor and Council and the General Assembly. "The church," he says, "was crowded, the people very attentive, and many were greatly affected." One of the lawyers said that it would not answer for him to hear Allen, "for he was so strongly wrought upon thereby that he could not forbear weeping."

Thus did the Methodist Episcopal Church immediately after its organization spread in the South. All the events, however, of the year 1785, are not as pleasing to contemplate as those we have reviewed. The Christmas Conference adopted a rule requiring members of the Church to set their bondmen free, and forbidding the admission of slave-holders into the Church and to the Lord's Supper, except they emancipated their slaves. Coke proposed to maintain the deliverance of the Church on slavery. Accordingly, while preaching in a barn in Virginia, he denounced human bondage. His words roused to wrath the defenders of the traffic in men. They withdrew from the audience and decided to punish the preacher. A woman became so enraged that she offered the mob £50 if they would give "that little doctor" a hundred lashes. He was surrounded as he passed from the building, but escaped injury.

He preached in the same neighborhood the following day. A large number of men gathered with clubs and staves. In another place he was indicted by the grand jury, and not less than ninety persons agreed to pursue him, and bring him, as a culprit, to punishment. He reached North Carolina, and, with Asbury, met the Conference on the twentieth of April, 1785, at the house of Green Hill. Here the new rule on slavery was given prominence. Jesse Lee was present, and dissented from the views of Coke respecting it. Coke thought Lee unsound in his opinions of the great evil, and, therefore, arrested his character in the Conference. Lee promptly replied, and was interrupted by Coke. Subsequently Coke made a satisfactory apology to Lee, whose feelings he had wounded. The work was found to be very prosperous in that region, and an increase of almost a thousand crowned the year.

At the Conference in Virginia, a few days later, the agitation on slavery was also visible. Many leading laymen were present to urge the suspension of the rule. "But

when they found," says Coke, "that we had thought of withdrawing ourselves entirely from the circuit on account of the violent spirit of some leading men, they drew in their horns, and sent us a very humble letter, entreating that preachers might be appointed to their circuit."

Well would it have been for Christianity and liberty throughout the world, and especially in the United States, had the young Church unflinchingly maintained its attitude toward slavery. The country was new, the nation was in its infancy, and the system of bondage had not grown to masterful proportions. Methodist slave-holders were considering emancipation, and a number gave freedom to their slaves. A Church of Jesus Christ, free from complication with it, would have stood as an effective witness against slavery in the Southern States. The Church should not have made concessions to an institution which it believed was hostile to righteousness, however enthroned by law. It was not the office of the Church to yield to the clamor of slave-holders, and lower its banner to conciliate them; rather it should have been unswervingly bold and faithful in maintaining its standard of Christian ethics, though persecuted to the death. Thus it would have led public opinion, and arrayed the conscience of the nation and of the South itself against the great crime. At its organization, the Church was planted on the eternal rock of righteousness. Only a few months elapsed, however, before the violent opposition of the slave-holders effected its purpose, and a humiliating recession was announced in the Minutes in these words: "It is recommended to all our brethren to suspend the execution of the minute on slavery till the deliberations of a future Conference."

Coke, however, retained his zeal for liberty. He saw, as with prophetic eye, the doom of slavery and the relation of Methodism to its overthrow. He said, April 23, 1795, in a letter to the Rev. Daniel Hitt: "My dear brother,

have great compassion on the poor negroes, and do all you can for their conversion. If they have religious liberty their temporal slavery will comparatively be but a small thing. But even with respect to this latter point I do long for the time when the Lord will turn their captivity like the streams of the south; and he will appear for them. He is winding up the *sacred ball;* he is sweeping off the wicked; and will never withdraw his hand till civil and religious liberty be established all over the earth. I have no doubt that if the body of Methodist preachers keep close to God, they will be the chief instruments of bringing about this most desirable state of things. Let us be a praying, preaching, self-denying set of men, and we shall carry the world before us."

Turning from the South, northward we see the cause progressing. In February, 1785, Coke found the Church in Philadelphia advancing; St. George's was to be finished, for, says Coke, "They are now going to plaster our church here; the scaffolding is already put up." Better than all, the spiritual temple was rising. Coke writes, "There is certainly a considerable revival in this city."* In Wilmington, Delaware, he found a revival also; and when he reached Baltimore, he wrote, "There is certainly a considerable revival here." He also reports a subscription of £500 sterling toward the erection of another church in that city.

In New Jersey important trophies were won. This year, 1785, John Haggerty entered Elizabeth, and was entertained by a Mr. Morrell. Morrell also allowed Haggerty to preach in his house, and his son Thomas, a merchant in middle life, heard the sermon. It was the first sermon from a Methodist preacher the younger Morrell ever heard. Haggerty's text on that occasion was one that has done great service in Methodism, namely, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting

* Journal in "Arminian (American) Magazine."

life." Thomas Morrell had been a Revolutionary officer, and that sermon led him to enlist in the ranks of the Captain of Salvation. Soon after his conversion, Haggerty led him forth to preach. He abandoned a lucrative business and joined the itinerancy. He became a leader in Methodism and a trusted friend of Asbury. The latter desired him to go to Charleston in 1791, which he did, and for some months he served the Church there when it was convulsed by secession under Hammett. For about seven years in all, Morrell was stationed in the city of New York. He was also stationed in Philadelphia and in Baltimore. Failing health compelled him to retire from the regular ministry in 1804, though for years afterward he abounded in labors for the Church.

Mr. Morrell was under medium height, with a square, well-knit frame, "a dark piercing eye," and a countenance which revealed decision and great kindness of heart. His voice was clear and strong, and under complete control. "His appearance in the pulpit was grave and dignified. His sermons were characterized by strong sense and sound theology. Not infrequently his preaching was attended with an unction" that melted both himself and his audience.* "He was the friend of the indigent, his house the home of the itinerant, and his attachment to the Church of his choice strengthened" with his years. When dying, at the age of ninety, he said to his wife, "Why do you weep? I am going to glory." "The Christian's Home" was sung at his bedside. He tried to join in the song, and said, "I shall soon be there." A few minutes before life ceased he exclaimed, "All is well."† His death occurred August 9, 1838.

In the autumn of 1786 Robert Cloud went to Staten Island, and a great revival followed his labors. He was joined in the work a little later by Thomas Morrell,

* John Lee to the author.

† Letter of his son, the Rev. Francis Asbury Morrell, to the author.

who was induced to go to his help. While prosecuting his ministry on the Island, Cloud was challenged by a Baptist clergyman to discuss publicly the points of difference between the Methodist doctrines and Calvinism. He accepted the challenge. Mr. Morrell and a Baptist minister were chosen to preside at the debate. On the day that the discussion took place, the Baptist expressed confidence that he would easily overthrow his opponent. But Cloud was not only wise to win souls, he was also a skillful polemic. The debate called out a multitude. Cloud opened the discussion and gave a convincingly clear exposition of Methodist theology, and also exposed the exceptionable points of Calvinism, so that his adversary was well-nigh confounded. In his reply the Baptist minister occupied only about half the allotted time. Cloud then made another brief address, and remarking that his arguments were unrefuted, and that his opponent had said but little that called for a rejoinder, he resumed his seat. The Baptist made no further attempt to speak. Morrell then arose and said: "As the discussion appears to be closed, I put it to the audience whether Mr. Cloud or his opponent has triumphed." By an almost unanimous expression by rising the audience pronounced in favor of Mr. Cloud. Methodism, then a feeble plant in Staten Island, "began to take root. The people flocked to hear the 'circuit preachers,' received the truth gladly, and the word of God grew and multiplied." *

Doctrinal controversy was rife in those days. The tenets of Calvin were stoutly maintained by learned adherents. The heralds of free grace were confronted by the advocates of the "decrees," and not always did the Methodist theology receive gentle treatment at their hands. American Methodism then had no journals to exhibit and defend its theological symbols, and therefore an important part of the work of the itinerant preachers was to expose doctrinal error, and to illustrate and defend the doctrines of

* Letter of the Rev. F. A. Morrell to the author.

their Church. By debate, and by controversial preaching, they enlightened the people on vital theological questions, and frequently overwhelmed their adversaries. They cultivated the polemic art, and their skill in it was demonstrated by the rapid spread of the doctrines of Methodism. Asbury possessed controversial zeal, and while of a very catholic spirit, he raised his voice against what he believed to be injurious error. Writing to Wesley from New Jersey, he says, "We are much beset by a mixed people, warm for their own peculiarities in doctrines and forms. I could not have thought that reformed Churches had so much policy and stubborn prejudices. No means are left untried to prevent us, but we know and feel that God is with us." "I see clearly," continues Asbury, "that the Calvinists, on the one hand, and the Universalists, on the other, very much retard the work of God, especially in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, for they both appear to keep the people from seeking heart religion. Maryland does not abound with Calvinism, but in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, the Baptists labor to stand by what they think is the good old cause." He advised Wesley to employ the Magazine, which he controlled, in this polemic warfare. "I think," he says, "that you ought always to keep the front of the 'Arminian Magazine' filled with the best pieces you can get, both ancient and modern, against Calvinism."*

The young Church, with Asbury at its head, went forth from its Christmas birth and baptism to save the people, not only by summoning them to repentance, but also by removing as much as possible the hinderances to their salvation which arose from erroneous beliefs. It not only turned men from the error of their ways, it also turned them from errors of opinion. It not only led them to the Cross, it also led them to embrace a simple, rational, healthful theology. It contended earnestly, and at the

* Asbury's Letter, September, 20, 1783, "Arminian Magazine," 1791, pp. 385, 386.

same time with marvelous skill and success for the evangelical doctrines—"the faith once delivered to the saints."

In that controversial period the theological deliverance of the Christmas Conference did not, of course, escape rigid scrutiny. It avoided largely the speculative and disputed ground of theology, and affirmed the most conspicuous truths of the orthodox faith. Its very brevity and simplicity, however, provoked criticism. Because it did not include more, it was suspected of being fatally defective. It was whispered that the new Church denied the doctrine of the Trinity, inasmuch as it did not include in its theological formula the Athanasian and the Nicene Creeds. The Christmas Conference desired Coke to publish his sermon on "The Godhead of Christ." This he did shortly after the Conference rose, and thus he hoped to hush the whisperings of heresy respecting the Church in that particular.* Never did a body of ministers adhere more thoroughly to the doctrine of the tri-personality of the Godhead than those who composed the Conference which organized American Methodism into a Church. Never did a Church enter upon its mission with a creed more in consonance with reason and the intuitions of the soul; never since the pentecostal epoch was a creed more successfully employed in the work of salvation and of civilization.

* "Coke's Journal;" "Arminian Magazine," (American,) 1789, p. 193.

CHAPTER VI.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS OF THE NEW CHURCH.

ONE of the most remarkable facts about the Christmas Conference of 1784 was its unselfish consideration of the wants of the foreign field. Though the new Church numbered only about eighty ministers, and its field at home was large and constantly extending, it ordained three preachers as missionaries to other lands. It had no missionary organization, no treasury filled with gold, but it was at its birth a missionary Church. Says a primitive itinerant: "Such was the poverty of the Church without missionary funds, that the minister who would go must beg his way, and trust for his reception. If the Lord Jesus did not cause him to find friends by touching their hearts, he must be friendless as well as penniless. He could not say, 'I am a Baptist, or I am a Presbyterian; I am a Quaker, or I am a Churchman—I claim something from you, as your fathers were of our religion'—but, 'I am a Wesleyan Methodist; please to hear me, and if you do not like my doctrine, tell me so, and I will go from you peaceably if you will let me.'" *

The new Church made good its "apostolic boast," immediately after its organization, by responding to a call for help from Nova Scotia. It sent two laborers to that northern field. It also heard an appeal from the tropics, and sent a preacher to the island of Antigua—the land of earthquakes and of hurricanes. The missionaries to the former field were Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell. Jeremiah Lambert went alone to Antigua.

* Phœbus's "Memoirs of Whatcoat."

As the Church at the Christmas Conference had no missionary treasury from which to draw funds for the equipment and transportation of its missionaries, it obtained money for the purpose by a public collection. The first collection American Methodism raised for foreign missions was at Baltimore, during the session of the historic Conference of 1784. Coke, who became the *facile princeps* of Methodism in the great missionary movements which have honored its history, records both the fact and the amount of that collection. Considering the feebleness and poverty of the Church at the time, it may be called liberal. Coke says: "One of the week days, at noon, I made a collection toward assisting our brethren who are going to Nova Scotia and Antigua, and our friends generously gave £50 currency (£30 sterling.)" * Coke also procured funds for the same purpose in other cities after the Conference closed, for he says: "Our friends in Philadelphia and New York gave me £60 currency for the missionaries, so that upon the whole I have not been above £3 or £4 out of pocket on their account." †

Dr. Coke was the first missionary secretary and treasurer of the Methodist Episcopal Church. True, the Church knew nothing of such offices then, yet he did the work which appertains to them. On Monday, the third of January, 1785, he left Baltimore, and on the eighth of that month he was in Philadelphia, where he urged the claims of the missionary movement, and received contributions therefor. On the twenty-second of the same month he was in the city of New York, where he was chiefly occupied with the affairs of the missions, for which he there received further aid. There also he published his sermon on "The Godhead of Christ," in compliance with the desire of the Christmas Conference.

In New York, Coke arranged for the departure of the missionaries. He secured passage for Garrettson to Hali-

* "Arminian Magazine," (American,) 1789, p. 292. † Ibid.

fax, and "left," he says, "some money for Brother Cromwell, who is soon to follow him." He also says: "I have now given over all thought of going to the West Indies; but have taken a ship for Brother Lambert, our elder. He is an excellent young man, and will, I trust, be a great blessing in that country." *

The total sum raised by Coke for the missions in the three cities whose contributions he records, was £110 currency—£66 sterling—or about $325. That first contribution of the Methodist Episcopal Church for foreign missions is noteworthy. From its organization the new Church was consecrated to the great work of the world's evangelization.

About the middle of February, 1785, Garrettson and Cromwell sailed for Halifax.† They encountered a severe storm, "so that," says Garrettson, "we almost despaired of life." They, however, after a two-weeks' voyage, reached their desired haven. They began their mission immediately in that "land of frost and snow." Cromwell went to Shelbourne and Garrettson remained at Halifax, where he laid the foundation of the Church.

The work prospered under the labors of the missionaries and many were brought to God. Garrettson, however, nearly perished from the severity of the weather. While riding to an appointment, through an unsettled country, with the hail beating in his face, he became unable to guide his horse. At length the horse stopped before an hospitable door, the only dwelling he, for some time, had seen. He was able to dismount and throw himself upon a bed. Only children were in the house, but they covered the benumbed missionary, and for nine hours he lay almost insensible.

Concerning his own work Cromwell wrote: "The Lord enabled me to go on as far as Cape Negro. I could only stay to preach a few sermons. It would do you good to

* "Arminian Magazine," (American,) 1780, p. 292.

† "Experience and Travels of Garrettson."

see the dear people, some rejoicing and others mourning. Depend upon it, there is a blessed revival here."

Garrettson was summoned by Coke to the Conference at Baltimore in 1787. On the tenth of April of that year he sailed from Halifax for Boston, leaving in Nova Scotia "about six hundred members of society." As the foundations of the cause in that land had been laid previously to their appointment, it is not likely that all those members were gathered while Garrettson and Cromwell labored there, though their work was successful. Lee, in his "History of the Methodists," says that, at the Conference of 1787, the number of members in Nova Scotia and Antigua was one thousand five hundred and ten.

Garrettson was designated by Mr. Wesley as Superintendent of the work in the British American dominions; and when the subject was considered by the Conference at Baltimore it was, he says, "unanimously sanctioned. Dr. Coke, as Mr. Wesley's delegate and representative, asked me if I had made up my mind to accept the appointment. I told him I had upon certain conditions. I observed to him that I was willing to go on a tour and visit those parts to which I was appointed for one year, and if there was a cordiality in the appointment with those to whom I was sent, I would return at the next Conference and receive ordination to the office of Superintendent. His reply was, 'I am perfectly satisfied;' and he gave me a recommendatory letter to the brethren in the West India Islands. I had intended, as soon as Conference rose, to pursue my voyage to the West India Islands; to visit Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and in the spring to return. What transpired in the Conference during my absence I know not; but was astonished, when the appointments were read, to hear my name mentioned to preside in the peninsula."* Cromwell also returned to the work in the United States.

* Garrettson's Semi-Centennial Sermon, p. 21.

Lambert, the missionary to Antigua, could not have remained long in that field; for finding his health declining he returned to Maryland, where he died as early as 1786. He was a true missionary, being the first Methodist preacher that was appointed west of the Alleghanies. In 1783 he entered East Tennessee, and helped to found the Church in that then wild and perilous land. He may, indeed, be considered as the first missionary of American Methodism; for when he bore the Cross to Tennessee, it was a mission field. His circuit—Holston—"embraced all the settlements on the Watauga, Nolachucky, and Holston Rivers, including those in what are now Greene, Washington, Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, and Hawkins Counties, Tennessee; and Washington, Smyth, Russell, and perhaps Lee and Scott Counties, Virginia. As the country was sparsely settled, provisions scarce, and the Indians very troublesome, his hardships and sufferings must have been severe—no accommodations for traveling, lodging, study, or any thing else. Without hope of earthly reward, and often without food or shelter, he made his way as best he could in the name and for the sake of Him who said: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'" * It is not strange that such a hero should have been ready to carry the glad tidings to a foreign shore.

The missionary zeal which glowed in the heart of the young Church did not expire after its glorious manifestation at the Christmas Conference. While Garrettson and Cromwell were yet in Nova Scotia, and Lambert had so quickly exchanged his tropical mission field for Paradise, another missionary movement was projected. On the last Sunday in the month of April, 1786, Asbury took up a collection in Baltimore "to defray the expenses of sending missionaries to the western settlements," and, he says, "I

* The Rev. Dr. M'Annally, in M'Ferrin's "History of Methodism in Tennessee."

spoke twice on the same subject through the course of the week." At the Conference held in Baltimore, in May, 1786, James Haw and Benjamin Ogden were appointed to the country of Daniel Boone; and thus Kentucky became one of the earliest theaters of the missionary energy and enthusiasm of that Church whose victorious march over the world began with the year 1785. Before the young missionaries lay a wilderness untrodden and pathless, and beyond it a dense forest which was the abode of savages and of wild beasts. No place of friendly shelter, no itinerant's home that they knew, awaited them. No expectant eyes watched their coming. No board of missions gave them assurance of support. Through the wild solitude they journeyed, not to seek wealth nor ease, but to endure hardship, toil, and peril for the sake of Christ and of souls. They reached their appointed field in the latter part of the summer, and began the proclamation of the Gospel. Some Methodists from Maryland had previously been attracted to the new and fertile land which Boone made famous by his daring exploits, and one of these was among the first to give the missionaries a welcome. In the home of Thomas Stevenson, whose son, the Rev. Dr. Stevenson, in a subsequent generation was prominent as a minister, Mr. Ogden remained for some days, gathering the people together at night for religious instruction, and visiting and praying with them by day.

The missionaries were esteemed as men of great zeal and devotion, and their work was successful. A Presbyterian lady heard them and was immediately convicted and soon converted, she having previously been destitute of vital piety. She joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, and subsequently gave a son—Jonathan Stamper—to the itinerancy, a son whose zeal and eloquence contributed largely to the growth of Methodism in Kentucky.

At the close of the year ninety members were reported.

In view of the sparseness of the population and the difficulties the missionaries encountered, the results of the year's labors were by no means small.

Not being able to make the necessary journey, so as to report in person at the Conference, Haw wrote concerning the work, and strongly pleaded for re-enforcements. He, however, urged that none should be sent who were afraid to die. Kentucky was then an Indian battle-ground, and the merciless savages, wily and bloodthirsty, from their skulking places shot and scalped the white man, or carried him away into captivity, to be, perhaps, the victim of terrible tortures. Sometimes the Indians would thrust sharp sticks into the quivering flesh of the affrighted captives, and then set them on fire. Some of their fiend-like atrocities were too horrible to contemplate. In traveling abroad among the settlements the missionaries risked these appalling perils. While, therefore, Haw called loudly for help, he made it clearly known that no preachers were wanted except such as would dare to face torture and death for Christ's sake and for the sake of perishing sinners. When his letter, setting forth the necessities of the work and the dangers involved in prosecuting it, was read to the Conference, Thomas Williamson, a young preacher, stepped forth, and in effect said: "Here am I; send me." He was taken at his word and appointed to Kentucky with James Haw and Wilson Lee. He, as would be expected of such a hero, proved a faithful and successful laborer. Another circuit was formed, which was traveled in 1787 by Benjamin Ogden, and extended into Tennessee.

In charge of such heroic preachers, of course the work advanced. Revival flames were kindled that swept over the territory. Haw wrote to Asbury, saying: "A letter from Brother Williamson, dated November 10, 1788, informs me that the work is still going on rapidly in Kentucky; that at two quarterly meetings the Lord poured

out his Spirit and converted ten penitents and sanctified five believers at the first, and twenty more were converted at the second. Indeed, the wilderness and the solitary places are glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose, and I trust will soon become beautiful as Tirza and comely as Jerusalem. What shall I more say? Time would fail to tell you all the Lord's doings amongst us; it is marvelous in our eyes. To Him be glory, honor, praise, power, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and forever. Amen, and amen."

In the same letter Haw describes a quarterly meeting held in Bourbon County, Kentucky, in July, 1788. He says: "The Lord poured out his Spirit in a wonderful manner, first on the Christians, and sanctified several of them very powerfully and gloriously. The seekers also felt the power and presence of God, and cried for mercy at the point of death. We prayed with and for them, till we had reason to believe that the Lord converted seventeen or eighteen precious souls. Halleluiah!" At another quarterly meeting soon after, he says: "The work of sanctification among the believers broke out at the Lord's table, and the Spirit of the Lord went through the assembly like a mighty rushing wind; some fell, many cried for mercy. Sighs and groans proceeded from their hearts; tears of sorrow for sin ran streaming down their eyes. Their prayers reached to heaven, and the Spirit of the Lord entered into them and filled fourteen or fifteen with peace and joy in believing. Salvation! O, the joyful sound. How the echo flies." *

Some time in the summer of 1788 Haw went to Cumberland Circuit with Peter Massie, where they had large success in winning souls. He writes: "Brother Massie is with me going on weeping over sinners, and the Lord blesses his labors."

The zealous Haw heard of Natchez, on the Mississippi,

* "Arminian Magazine," (American,) 1789.

then under the government of Spain, where, he says, "there are (they say) six or seven hundred American families who have no Protestant minister of any kind, and who, I fear, are perishing for want of the bread of life." He evidently felt that if it were practicable the Church ought to extend its missionary operations to that region, and says: "I expect to know by the spring if there be free and full toleration there, and if there be, to make the report to the Conference." Thus did the young missionary Church watch for openings into distant fields, and yearn to "preach the Gospel to every creature."

We have seen that before the organization of the Church the mission field in Tennessee was visited and cultivated by Lambert. The next year Henry Willis succeeded him in that work. As a result of its remoteness Willis failed to reach the Christmas Conference at Baltimore. At a Conference in the spring of 1787 volunteers were called for to go with John Tunnell as missionaries to East Tennessee. Mr. Tunnell's father had written to his son, describing the religious destitution of the people in that country, and urging him to come to them "and bring with him two or three young men who counted not their lives dear;" for, he added, "their lives will often be in jeopardy from the red men of the wilderness." Willis, from his personal observation, confirmed all that the elder Tunnell had said, and stated that those who went there "should know that they must ford and swim the rivers at the risk of life; sleep, if they could, in the summer in blankets, and in winter in open log-cabins with light bed-clothes, and often in bed with two or three children." He further insisted that they should understand the perils from the cruel Indians. "The red man," he said, "seeing his possessions wasting away, as the white man approaches, has become infuriated, and is resolved to sell his country at the dearest rate, and, savage-like, wreaks his vengeance indiscriminately. Many a hapless virgin, or mother and her

innocent babes, are slaughtered or led away captives." Mr. Willis further said that money was scarce in that country and clothing dear.*

Three young men, however, one of whom was Thomas Ware, in defiance of all the hardships and dangers of which they were thus apprised, responded to the call. When they reached their perilous field they saw how great was its need. "The population," says Ware, "was vastly scattered, insomuch that a parochial ministry could not be supported. And, although it had become a State, it might rather be called a pagan than a Christian State; for, when we arrived there, there were not more than four or five sorry preaching-houses within its whole jurisdiction, two of which had been built by the Methodists."

The perils from savages Mr. Ware experienced. One day he approached a high grove, when suddenly his horse snorted and wheeled about. At that moment Ware espied an Indian, too far off, however, for rifle shot. He gave rein to his horse and rode to the nearest settlement. But for the fright which his horse showed at the sight of the Indian he might have been captured or scalped. At another time, while he was preaching at a dwelling-house, an alarm was heard. "Indians!" was shouted. The audience were seized with terror. Each man instantly grasped his rifle and rushed out. Two lads were seen running and screaming, "The Indians have killed mother." About a quarter of a mile away the preacher and his congregation found the woman into whose head a stealthy Indian had plunged the tomahawk in the sight of her children. They were far enough away to escape, but their exclamation, "The Indians have killed mother," was, alas! too true.

In 1787 Mr. Ogden, as we have seen, was sent to Cumberland Circuit, which also embraced a portion of Middle

* The Rev. Thomas Ware in "Christian Advocate and Journal," February, 1834.

Tennessee—adjacent to Kentucky—the region of Nashville and Gallatin. These Tennessee settlements were kept in a state of alarm, if not of desperation, by the Indians. "Those who attended on the ministry of the word went armed, not knowing what moment they would be attacked and massacred. Yet this missionary of the Cross traveled through a considerable desert from Kentucky, and preached the Gospel in those forlorn settlements." Thus American Methodism opened its great and illustrious career as a missionary Church.

Having grandly begun, the young Church continued to earnestly toil in the mission field. In 1796 Coate and Wooster, as we shall soon see, braved the hardships of the great wilderness in reaching Canada. In May, 1806, Asbury wrote Coke: "The Western Conference has been mindful of the region beyond them—I mean south-west of the Territories, on the Mississippi and Louisiana. We have six missionaries who have gone into those parts among the savage tribes six, eight, or nine hundred miles through the wilderness." In the same year he wrote: "We have made efforts to establish a mission among the French in Canada. Our Mississippi missionaries are pushing on south-west toward the Pacific Ocean." March 30, 1808, Asbury wrote to Coke, saying: "We have to thrust out several of our preachers into the extremities, and some preachers and their wives have to draw almost their whole salary from the Conferences. Last year we had to send six missionaries nine hundred miles through the help of a voluntary collection from the Western Conference. We gave only ten dollars to each of the missionaries who had five and six hundred miles to travel through the Indian country." Thus, with slender pecuniary equipment, but with heroic zeal, the Methodist missionaries entered the open doors, penetrating the wilderness and the solitary place, preaching the Gospel.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD ITINERANCY.

ONE of the chief acts of the Christmas Conference was the formal organization of the American Methodist itinerancy. Though born in a university, Methodism quickly began to itinerate. The Wesleys and Whitefield went to and fro over the land and the sea. No opposition baffled them, nor dangers appalled. Wesley was soon joined in his labors by other clergymen of the Church; and particularly by zealous converts who, though they had not received the imposition of hands, had received power from on high. "The employment of lay preachers, in the judgment of every body but their patron, was sufficient to ruin his cause. How desperate, how mad, must the attempt have appeared, to make head against a kingdom of opponents with such raw and undrilled recruits. But the members of the Establishment at length beheld with amazement the progress of Wesleyan Methodism."

Robert Strawbridge, one of the first, and, according to Asbury, the *first*, of the founders of Methodism in this country,* though a local preacher, traveled abroad. Wesley's missionaries soon appeared in the field, and quickly swept over almost all the settled portions of the American provinces.

The itinerancy in America was put under an effective system by Mr. Wesley. On the tenth of October, 1772, Mr. Asbury received from him the appointment of Assistant. In 1773 Mr. Wesley sent two additional laborers, namely, Thomas Rankin and George Shadford. "As Mr.

* Asbury, in his "Journal," vol. iii, p. 24, and in the year 1801, says: "Here Mr. Strawbridge formed the first society in Maryland and *America*."

Rankin had been a traveling preacher longer than Mr. Asbury, he took the superintendency and was styled the General Assistant." Rankin, as we have seen, left the country in the stormy days of the Revolution. Then "Mr. Asbury, the only old preacher that determined, in those perilous times, to give up his parents, country, and all his natural connections, was finally and unanimously chosen by the preachers, assembled in Conference, General Assistant." * This was done in April, 1779, when communication with England was closed by the war. After the war ceased Mr. Wesley again wrote Asbury, appointing him to the office to which his brethren had elected him, and he received the letter about a year before the Christmas Conference.

The itinerant preachers, under the system then existing, were of three grades, namely, helpers, assistants, and general assistants. The helper was the young or junior preacher of the circuit. "The assistant was the eldest preacher in the circuit, who had the charge of the young preachers and of the business of the circuit. The general assistant was the preacher who had the charge of all the circuits, and of all the preachers, and appointed all the preachers to their several circuits, and changed them as he judged necessary. His being called a general assistant, signified that he was to assist Mr. Wesley in carrying on the work of God in a general way, without being confined to a particular circuit as another preacher."†

The Christmas Conference, as we have seen, adopted two orders for the ministry, namely, deacon and elder; and also the plan of a Superintendency as received from Mr. Wesley. It vested in the Superintendents the power to appoint the preachers to their work. That authority was exercised under Wesley by Rankin and by Asbury, each

* Life of the Rev. William Watters, p. 104.

† "Wesleyan Repository," article on "American Itinerancy."

of whom served, though not at the same time, as General Assistant. The General Superintendents, as was shown on a former page, were not invested with any authority which Asbury did not previously exercise, except that of ordination.

Another important member of the itinerant organization came into existence at the Christmas Conference; namely, the office of presiding elder. Bishops Coke and Asbury, in their Notes on the Discipline of 1796, inform us that "in the year 1784, the presiding eldership did, in *fact*, though not in *name*, commence." They also say that "when Mr. Wesley drew up a plan of government for our Church in America, he desired that no more elders should be ordained in the first instance than were absolutely necessary, and that the work on the continent should be divided between them in respect to the duties of their office. The General Conference accordingly elected twelve elders for the above purposes." A writer on "American Itinerancy," in the "Wesleyan Repository," July, 1822, says: "The year following the General Conference [of 1784] the Superintendents selected several elders, and gave them the oversight of a number of circuits, with power to direct all the preachers in their respective districts during the absence of the Superintendent." The two Superintendents, in their "Notes," furthermore say: "Bishop Asbury and the District Conferences * afterward found that this order of men was so necessary that they agreed to enlarge the number and give them the name by which they are at present called; and this proceeding afterward received the approbation of Mr. Wesley." The office was formally adopted by the first General Conference of the new Church in 1792. That "General Conference, equally conscious of the necessity of having such an office among us, not only confirmed every thing that Bishop Asbury and the District Conferences had done, but also drew up or

* Now known as Annual Conferences.

agreed to the present section for the explanation of the nature and duties of the office. The Conference clearly saw that the Bishops wanted assistants; that it was impossible for one or two Bishops so to superintend the vast work on this continent as to keep every thing in order in the intervals of the Conference without other official men to act under them and assist them." *

Asbury was not inclined to multiply presiding elders further than the work required. In April, 1805, he wrote to the Rev. William Colbert, then in charge of the Chesapeake District: "I have some serious thoughts about a change of the presiding elders of the Susquehanna and Chesapeake. Perhaps some things in the former case may make it ready. How you may feel I cannot say. I am not forward to increase that order only as they are necessary." †

During the first quarter of a century of the existence of the Methodist Episcopal Church the presiding elders did not participate, in a formal way at least, in the work of stationing the preachers. They, however, changed the preachers when they chose in the absence of the Bishop. In a letter of November 7, 1804, to the Rev. Daniel Hitt, then presiding elder of Alexandria District, Baltimore Conference, Asbury confessed the competency of the presiding elders for the stationing work. He was then on his way to Charleston, and doubted if he should be able to preside at the next Baltimore Conference. In the letter he says: "I have written to appoint a president. I believe it will come to that in time. I am in no doubt nor fear but the Conference will do as well or better without me than with me. The presiding elders have more local knowledge and personal information about the preachers than I have. I only go because it is my appointment from

* Coke and Asbury, "Notes on the Discipline."

† Autograph letter of Asbury owned by Frank S. Petter, Esq., Jersey City, New Jersey.

the Conference, and to cast in my mite as I cannot be idle." *

"The Bishop's Cabinet" was not known to the administration of Asbury, or if it was, it was not until near the end of his career. In the latter part of his life we get glimpses of something approaching the cabinet. At the Conference in Kentucky, in October, 1805, Asbury says: "I completed my plan for the coming year and submitted it to the presiding elders, who suggested but two alterations. May they be for the best." In a letter of November 27, 1812, the Bishop said: "I must repose great confidence in, and expect great help from, the presiding elders. They must be my committee of information, council, and safety." At the Conference in Charleston, in December, 1812, he says: "The presiding eldership and the Episcopacy saw eye to eye in the business of the stations." At a Conference in Albany, in June, 1815, Asbury writes: "Although confined to my room, I was not prevented from entering deeply into the consideration of the plan of the stations; the elders thought I came out well." He writes, in September of the same year, as follows: "As to the stations, I should never exhibit a plan unfinished, but still get all the information in my power so as to enable me to make it perfect, like the painter who touches and retouches until all the parts of the picture are pleasing. The plan I might be

* Bishop Asbury, in this letter to Hitt, says: "I feel my weakness and calculate upon the probability of a failure in attending the Baltimore Conference, to be held at Winchester, Va., April 1, 1805. This is to appoint you according to the power delegated to me by the late General Conference. You must preside in the Conference, and do all things with a single eye to the glory of God. Admit, examine, elect and station the preachers, and God be with and bless you. Given under my hand the 10th day of November, 1804. Ever thine, Francis Asbury." The Bishop did preside at the Conference, however. In his Journal in 1805 he wrote: "April 1. We opened the Baltimore Conference: sitting five days in very great order and peace."

laboring on would always be submitted to such eyes as ought to see it."

When Mr. M'Kendree became a Superintendent he called the presiding elders to his assistance in the stationing work. He, unlike Asbury, had not witnessed the accession to the itinerant ranks of all the American preachers. He was one of them—a brother, rather than a father. His venerable colleague stood in a parental relation to the Church and the ministry; yet M'Kendree well knew the criticism and the agitation occasioned by the exercise of the appointing power by Asbury, and the resulting schism of 1792. In that agitation M'Kendree stood with the disaffected party as a leader, and for a time forsook the itinerancy, because the General Conference refused to reduce the Bishop's authority. It is believed that, at the General Conference of 1792, it was M'Kendree who "said in substance, if not verbatim, in opposition to Bishop Asbury's power to appoint the preachers where and as he thought proper, without allowing them an appeal from the Bishop to the Annual Conference—'It is an insult to my understanding; and such an extraordinary stretch of power, so tyrannical, (or) despotic, that I cannot, (or) will not submit to it.'" * When the effort to secure the privilege of an appeal to the Conference for the preachers who might be grieved by the Bishop's appointment failed in 1792, M'Kendree took his departure from the General Conference, with O'Kelly, and wrote Bishop Asbury, resigning his place in the itinerancy. † M'Kendree, however, subsequently reconsidered his decision and returned to the work.

Now that he was raised to the Episcopacy, M'Kendree declined to exercise the stationing power without the formal advice of the presiding elders. His course was not in entire accord with the views and practice of Asbury, nor

* The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper on the "Bishop's Power." "Wesleyan Repository," vol. iii, p. 303.

† See Asbury's "Journal," vol. ii., p. 174.

was it authorized by the law of the Church. Still, in a letter to Asbury, under date of October 8, 1811, M'Kendree declares: "I am fully convinced of the utility and necessity of the council of the presiding elders in stationing the preachers." And he closes the epistle with these positive words: "I still refuse to take the *whole* responsibility upon myself, not that I am afraid of proper accountability, but because I conceive the proposition includes one highly improper." *

The Superintendent's power of appointment was absolute. He could send the preachers where and when he willed. He could continue a preacher in one place as long as he judged best. The Bishop's authority to appoint was not restricted by even a "time-limit" until nearly twenty years after the Christmas Conference. The Rev. Alexander M'Caine wrote: "I rejoice in the recollection that the hand that holds the pen that now addresses you drew up the first and only restrictive article ever yet imposed on a Methodist Bishop; namely, 'that he shall not allow any preacher to remain in the same station more than two years successively, except,' etc. And wherefore? That itinerancy might be preserved. And, after a lapse of nearly twenty years, I am still of the same mind, and say, respecting it, *esto perpetua*." †

More than twenty years after M'Caine published this statement, another claimed the authorship of the resolution which embodied the two years' restriction. In "The Christian Advocate" of March 27, 1844, the Rev. Aaron Hunt said: "I wrote the resolution, and Brother Joseph Totten, of the Philadelphia Conference, seconded it. When read by the secretary it produced a momentary storm of opposition, and was laid on the table. Still in the interim of session hours the subject was discussed among the preachers, until we were prepared to take action upon

* "Life of the Rev. William M'Kendree."

† "Wesleyan Repository," vol. iii, p. 333.

it. When called up from the table, Brother George Dougharty, who always consulted the good of the Church in preference to the ease of a certain class of preachers, became its most able advocate, while it was opposed by Brothers Roszel, Roberts, and others, but after an animated debate was carried by a large majority."

As both M'Caine and Hunt claim to have written the important resolution, limiting the tenure of the appointments to two years, the office of the historian is performed by recording their respective claims. M'Caine printed his statement in January, 1824, less than twenty years after the rule was enacted; Hunt printed his claim in March, 1844, almost forty years after its enactment. The question is not who *offered* the resolution in the General Conference, but who *wrote* it.*

The limitation was strongly opposed, but such men as the eloquent and holy George Dougharty, of South Carolina, and the zealous Jesse Lee successfully advocated it. Difficulty had been encountered in removing certain preachers. Influential and wealthy congregations showed an unwillingness to part with popular ministers, and the latter were loath to leave good appointments. Mr. Hunt says: "Cyrus Stebbins had been two if not three years stationed in Albany, and had so ingratiated himself in the affections of some of the most influential members of the Church, that every attempt to remove him according to usage was met with the most determined opposition, while at the same time he was preparing to enter the Protestant Episcopal Church, which he did the following year. Mr. Asbury was much afflicted with this and similar cases within his field of labor." It is said that, in conversation,

*The Journal of the General Conference contains this item: "George Dougharty moved that the following addition be made to the second answer of the third question, fourth section, namely: "Provided he shall not allow any to remain in the same station more than two years successively, excepting the presiding elders, supernumeraries, superannuated and worn-out preachers. Carried." Colbert was there. He says Dougharty moved it.

the rule was suggested to Mr. Asbury, who replied pleasantly, "So you would limit the stationing power?" to which was rejoined, "Nay, we would give strength and energy to the stationing power."

The limitation of the appointments to two years was enacted by the General Conference of 1804. Concerning that body and its work, Asbury wrote: "Very little was done at our last General Conference, considering what a body of preachers were together. We passed a limitation act, that no preacher should stay longer than two years in any circuit. Before this the General Superintendents could let them stay seven years, if they chose."* The Bishop uses the term "seven years" in an indefinite sense. There had been no limit at all. Mr. Hunt states that he had "good reason to believe that Bishop Asbury was always well pleased with" this limitation.

A chief feature of the itinerancy was the ministerial activity it required. If a preacher settled he lost his place in the ranks. The law of the system was constant motion. Asbury, upon whom the work of the Superintendency chiefly devolved—for Coke was most of the time away from the country—traveled more abundantly than his preachers.

He was the main bulwark, as well as the indefatigable leader, of the itinerancy. The Rev. Nicholas Snethen, who was called Asbury's "silver trumpet," says: "We have always regarded Mr. Asbury as the father of the itinerant ministry in the United States. He maintained the ground through the early perils. When the want of learning was urged as an objection to the admission of a young man, Mr. Asbury would reply that the saddle-bags were the best school for traveling preachers, meaning that they learned faster and best on horseback. But he regarded them as learners on horseback, and no master was

* Letter from Francis Asbury to Zachary Miles, dated Baltimore, August 16, 1804.

more ready to rebuke the first indications of presumption or indolence. And in effect there was much schooling, though to superficial observers there seemed to be none, among these youthful itinerants. Experimental and practical knowledge was actually gained. How could any equal number of young men, with so few means, under so many difficulties, have done more work? In the first operations of itinerancy, under the eye of the first Superintendent, or Bishop, in this country, itinerant preachers worked out their salvation with fear and trembling; that is, their success was not owing to chance or accident; it was a real process of cause and effect. The great and widely-extended system of itinerancy in our country had its beginning, from which it progressed. There was working and acquiring experience on horseback. Mr. Asbury sincerely believed that to be the best college." *

As the chief of the itinerant forces Asbury greatly excelled. Mr. Snethen, who knew him so well, says that "the constitutional and habitual temperament of Mr. Asbury's feelings, their ardor and restlessness, kept every thing and every body in a state of motion." Nor was this ceaseless activity irksome to the itinerants. Of himself Snethen says: "I can now look back upon those youthful toils and travels, through which I was borne by the buoyancy of healthful and vigorous spirits with triumph and delight, as some agreeable dream." Said the Rev. William Colbert, in his Journal in 1793: "Though a life of traveling is very laborious and fatiguing, it is what I glory in." The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, in his Semi-Centennial sermon, in 1826, said: "Were I called back fifty years I would cheerfully retrace them in so glorious a cause in preference to sitting on a splendid earthly throne."

Of the *personnel* of the early itinerancy Snethen says: "I do think that the whole of ecclesiastical history may be challenged to produce so many men brought

* Snethen's sermon in the "Christian World," 1841.

together in so short a time, without the benefit of any previous religious education, whose lives and conversation were generally more becoming the Gospel. A few instances of those who were converted from notoriously wicked courses becoming preachers, and a still fewer number of apostates, have induced some, whose learning and standing in society ought to have secured them from such mistaken conceptions, to hold up the Methodist preachers as a mere reprobate race; whereas, the great proportion of the primitive preachers, especially the natives of this country, were young men, the fruit of revivals, but little practiced in the schools of vice. On a certain occasion, when the work was so rapidly progressing in the east as to call an unusual number of preachers in that quarter, Mr. Asbury, in allusion to the character and number of the missionaries, and the natural inquisitiveness of the eastern people, exclaimed: "I wonder where all these young men come from, riding good horses, with watches in their pockets?"*

The itinerants met opposition not only from the wicked but sometimes from even the clergy. The Rev. Henry Boehm said to the writer of these pages, that a Lutheran minister in Pennsylvania said: "Ah, beware of these land-strollers, for if they once get in, you can never get them out." Mr. Boehm added: "The last part of this remark was very true; for if our preachers had a revival in a place, they could never be got out."

When Boehm traveled Annamessex Circuit in 1801, his colleague, William Colbert, had an encounter which illustrates how professed Christians sometimes tried to prevent the "land-strollers" from getting a hearing. As he was passing in summer near a church where stood some beautiful oaks, Colbert put up an advertisement that he would preach there the next day but one from Matt. xviii, 3, and noting the fact in his journal he wrote, "Lord, give the word success." The day came, and

* "Methodist History," by the Rev. Nicholas Snethen.

says Colbert, "I repaired to the trees where I had advertised to preach, but such an ado as was made by the vestry I never saw. Thomas Laws and old Deshields warned me if I had any regard for my soul not to preach on the premises, for it was glebe land. I told them I had no design to make any disturbance, nor to invade any man's rights; that I saw the trees were in an open common by the side of the country road; that I thought there was no trespassing in advertising to preach where it was free for cattle and sheep to graze; but told them I would decline preaching under the trees or on their ground, but if the people would hear me in the road I was not afraid to preach. They told me the road ran through the land and I had no right to preach in it. I told them if they would convince me I was violating the law of the State I would not preach in it. Deshields told me it was against the sentiments of the congregation for me to preach there. I told him that the sentiments of the congregation were not the law of the State of Maryland; that I had preached under trees as near a church by a public road; that I never was denied the privilege of preaching in a common before; and told the people again, if they were not afraid to hear, I was not afraid to preach. They then told me if I would go one hundred yards either way, I should be off their ground. I then thought it not worth while to contend about going such a small distance, told the congregation to follow me and I would preach to them; but as they were few in number, and chiefly women, they got scattered and I expect afraid.*

The Rev. Nicholas Snethen, who became a traveling preacher in 1794, says of the early itinerants: "We were successful and we were happy. We took no thought for the morrow, and made no provision for days to come, for we anticipated none in which we were to say, we have no pleasure in them. We had no fathers in

* Colbert's manuscript Journal.

point of years to tell us that Methodist preachers would grow old, and how they feel when they are old. You have been accustomed to hear of the privations and sufferings of the first preachers; but the usual acceptation of these statements is not quite correct. It is true that, like other young men, and men in meridian vigor, they were subject to the infirmities and diseases incident to human nature; but the bright light, the warm sunshine, the spring-time, the May-day of prime life soon dispelled these passing clouds; for sickness itself in youth rarely fails to heighten sympathy, the bloom of beauty is only obscured, not faded, and low spirits, though distressing, only temporary. You are to keep in mind, then, that the primitive Methodist preachers, strictly so called, were a body composed mostly of young men, the leaders and seniors being generally under forty, or at most fifty.

"The graphic representation of the fathers of society is generally calculated to mislead, as people do not reflect that they could not have been old always. The father of us all, [Asbury,] whom you have seen with his black cap, and pale, wrinkled countenance, was known among us by his full and ruddy English face, his active and determined step, and untiring activity. It was not until the morbid action of a bilious habit, which was engendered in the low lands, began to disclose itself, that the marks of age and labor became visible upon him. A sallow and emaciated countenance among us was more generally the effect of climate than of the privation of domestic comforts. Our ancestors, among whom the first preachers labored, if they were unable or unwilling to give them much silver and gold, generally fed them well, and clothed them warmly. Their frequent revivals, while they augmented their fatigue, generally ministered to their temporal as well as spiritual delights. These were seasons in which the upper and nether springs poured forth their most copious and delicious streams. As age undermined their vigor, or they sank suddenly into

death, they were succeeded by a blooming race of hopeful youth, whose only ambition was to emulate the foremost. And though we should not be able in every instance to obviate the charge of enthusiasm, never, perhaps, was it found in a less offensive form."

The itinerancy, as it was organized at the Christmas Conference, was a great missionary system. The preachers on horseback, without dependents, were content with a nominal salary, while they lived among the people to whom they preached. One of them wrote: "The people are taught to believe that the Methodist preachers are neither avaricious nor extravagant, and they are taught truly. As a body there are no men in America, perhaps in the world, who live at so little expense, and are more economical in expending the donations of the generous benefactor." * Their zeal was equal to the demand for

* "Reply to O'Kelly" by Snethen. The Rev. William Moss left a record of the amount of salary paid to him for a period of eleven years, as follows: "*A just account of the money which I received in the different circuits I traveled :*"

1788.	Tar River Circuit	£11	0	0
1789.	Halifax Circuit	9	0	0
1790.	Hanover Circuit	13	12	10
1791.	Amherst Circuit	10	0	0
1792.	Orange Circuit	11	12	0
1793.	Mecklenburg Circuit	19	1	5
1794.	Gloucester Circuit	19	9	6
1795.	Anson and Little Pedee Circuit	6	19	6
1796.	Norfolk and Portsmouth towns	14	0	0
1797.	Sussex Circuit	19	0	0
1798.	Yadkin Circuit	14	7	6
		£148	2	9

The writer of Mr. Moss's obituary, James Patterson, says: "The sums in this statement were put down agreeably to the currency of Virginia: that is, six shillings to the dollar, the total of which is about four hundred and ninety-three dollars and seventy-nine cents; the eleventh part of which is forty-four dollars and eighty-nine cents." Thus Mr. Moss received quite less than an average of a dollar a week in cash during eleven years of itinerant service. Mr. Patterson adds: "His case in regard to this was not

their labors. They wandered along highways and by-ways, swam rivers, and plunged into forests in pursuit of perishing souls. They had, as a rule, received the baptism for their work at revival altars, and they spread revivals over the land.

Mr. Asbury looked to revivals chiefly for a supply of preachers. "He laid it down as a maxim to be relied upon, that in every genuine revival there is a proportion of ministerial seed sown. From the beginning the ministry of the Methodists has been so supplied. Not a few of the immediate subjects of the revivals have shown early indications of a movement toward the work." Thus the recruits of Asbury were commonly "called in revivals, and by revivals, to preach revivals," and so they swept over the country like "flames of fire." "As far as my knowledge of the primitive Methodist preachers in this country extended," says Mr. Snethen, "I can bear testimony to the marks and evidences of their sincerity. In point of moral purity and integrity they hold a high place in my estimation. Their general ignorance of the vices of the heart and of the world was, in some respects, a pledge of their innocence. Their desire to do good knew no bounds within the range of possibility. Faith, hope, love, and prayer were the means upon which they chiefly depended for their success. The young men generally acquired, either by imitation or study, a substantially correct mode of speaking and writing. Men of lib-

singular. It was a pretty general thing with the Methodist preachers at that time. Many of our primitive preachers with such paltry sums planted the doctrines of our Redeemer over extensive fields grown up in vice and folly." Bishop Asbury made the following record concerning the compensation of the preachers at the Conference in Virginia, in November, 1794: "After raising and applying what we could, (which was about £50,) we calculated that one fourth of the preachers at this Conference had received for their salary the past year about £10, one half from about £12 to £15, and one fourth their full quarterage, (sixty-four dollars.) We had great peace, and not one preacher objected to his station."

eral education and correct literary tastes were not found among them, though a few were not ignorant of the learned languages."

Among these devoted itinerants the invincible chief, Francis Asbury, moved, directing them where and how to work. He exercised large authority, but no greater than that which a general wields. At the head of his battalions the commander's word is supreme. Bishop Asbury, from the day that he went forth from the Christmas Conference, until he ascended to God, was the commander-in-chief of the cavalry department of the army of the Captain of Salvation in the United States. His soldiers knew how well he organized victory, and they followed him gladly. At his command they hastened to the field of danger and of triumph. The power which he exercised so faithfully was necessary to the aggressive movements of Methodism. It was very important that the itinerant warriors should be wisely distributed. Without the skillful generalship of Asbury they might have neglected posts where their presence was most necessary, and bestowed much of their force where it was least required. The great commander's eye swept the whole field, and by the unchallenged authority he executed he sent his men where they were needed. His vast journeys, which were performed in defiance of fatigue and danger, were not simply to preach, but to scan the field, learn its condition, inspirit the societies, counsel and animate his heroes, and show them where to labor. Stripped of the power he possessed, Asbury could not have been such a mighty ecclesiastical chieftain.

None saw so clearly as did he how essential to the greatest success of the evangelical movement which he led was his power to appoint the preachers. He knew that if he were divested of it he "would no more be able to send missionaries to the Western States and Territories in proportion to their rapid population. The grand circulation of ministers would be at an end. The surplus of

preachers in one Conference could not be drawn out to supply the deficiencies of others." *

When Bishop Asbury had well nigh reached the end of his toils, he, in company with his last traveling companion, the Rev. John Wesley Bond, was on the borders of one of the Western States, where he preached to a congregation in the woods. It was just after a battle on our northern frontier, in the last war with England, when the militia in the service of the government refused to cross the lines to assist the regular soldiers, who, at a disadvantage, fought the enemy. The venerable hero appealed to his audience with respect to the disinterested zeal of the Methodist preachers who first brought them the Gospel. "We followed you to the wilderness," said he, "when the earth was our only resting place and the sky our canopy; when your own subsistence depended on the precarious success of the chase, and consequently you had little to bestow on us. We sought not *yours*, but *you*. And now show us the people who have no preacher, and whose language we understand, and we will send them one; yes, we will send them one, for the Methodist preachers are not militia who will not cross the lines; they are regulars, and they must go." †

Beyond what any of his successors could wisely attempt, Asbury, who himself explored "the wilderness and the solitary place," in advance of, or in company with, his preachers, required obedience to his orders. Sylvester Hutchinson was one of the heroes of the early itinerancy. He was an intrepid and conquering soldier of Immanuel. In 1791 he exhorted and also preached at a quarterly meeting at the seat of Cokesbury College. Colbert was present, and says in his Journal: "Sylvester Hutchinson gave

* "Notes on the Discipline," by Coke and Asbury.

† "Appeal to the Methodists, in opposition to the changes proposed in their Church Government," by Thomas E. Bond, M. D. Baltimore, 1827. Dr. Bond states that he received the knowledge of this fact from his brother, who was with Bishop Asbury at the time.

us a fiery exhortation." On Sunday, continues Colbert, "as such a very great number of people came to this quarterly meeting to-day preaching was in the woods. Sylvester Hutchinson gave a sermon. He spoke powerfully." Asbury, without consent of the Conference, it is said, dropped Hutchinson's name from the Minutes when he was on a visit to the home of his youth. "Finding, on his return, that his name was dropped he remonstrated with Mr. Asbury and offered to continue in the ministry. Mr. Asbury finally offered him a circuit, but it was one in which he was not acceptable to the people. There was also another preacher who was not very acceptable where he had been sent, and Mr. Hutchinson and he proposed to the Bishop that they should be exchanged; but this was refused; and, turning to Mr. Hutchinson, he said: 'Go there, or go home.' Mr. Hutchinson answered, 'Then I must go home;' and thus [about 1805] ended his connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church." *

Bishop Asbury, however, did not, in every instance, maintain such an unyielding attitude toward remonstrating preachers. About the time that he was so rigid in his requirement of Hutchinson, he readjusted the appointments so as to suit another recalcitrant preacher. In April, 1805, he said in his Journal: "L. M'Combs had refused to take his station. After some alterations were made he consented to go to Philadelphia."

One of the most admirable traits of Asbury was his devotion to the welfare of his preachers. He was as tender in feeling as he was supreme in authority. "The preachers," he exclaimed, "whom I love in the bowels of Christ with much affection." Five years after the Christmas Conference he writes: "I collected about £28 for the poor suffering preachers in the West." In 1806 he was at the Western Conference. "The brethren," he writes,

* Daniel P. Hutchinson, son of the Rev. Sylvester Hutchinson, to the author.

"were in want, and could not suit [clothe] themselves; so I parted with my watch, my coat, and my shirt." * He could, when he judged the occasion required it, display his authority, but he was a father to his itinerants. "I have," he writes, "no interest, no passions in their appointments; my only aim is to care and provide for the flock of Christ." †

Such was the system of ministerial service which was established at the organization of American Methodism. Such was the central power of that system which, perilous as it would have been in the hands of a weak or selfish man, Asbury so successfully exercised. The adaptation of that unique ministerial system to the country appears providential. The settlements were widely scattered. The communities were generally small. The nation was in its infancy, and, by hard labor, was slowly developing the vast resources of the country, the wealth of which was to be chiefly enjoyed by subsequent generations. In most parts of the land there were but few churches and preachers. The tide of emigration flowed rapidly westward. The people generally had not the means, and frequently not the wish, to call and settle ministers. But the itinerants rode abroad, under the direction of their sagacious leader, and gave the Gospel to the people. By their preaching congregations were collected and societies were formed; then houses of worship, generally small and rude, were built. The Methodist preachers, in the prosecution of their holy mission, led the advancing civilization of the New World; and in a large degree is it due to the ministerial system of Methodism that the great States west of the Alleghany Mountains, as well as regions near the sea-board, escaped the degradation and perils of semi-barbarism.

An example of the missionary work accomplished by the itinerancy is given by Freeborn Garrettson. In the year 1790 he visited Boston, Connecticut, and Albany, preach-

* "Journal," vol. iii, p. 236. † "Journal," vol. ii, p. 223.

ing through the country as he traveled. He accomplished his tour in about four months, and then gives this view of the work: "A reformation in a variety of places has taken place. Hundreds, if not thousands, in the back settlements, who were not able to give £100 a year to a minister, and could seldom hear a sermon, may now hear a sermon at least once in two weeks; and sometimes oftener." Garrettson also speaks of the quickening, stimulating effect of the itinerancy upon the other denominations. "Some of the ministers," he says, "are more assiduous in their labors. If you will take pains to inquire among them, at least some can tell you that their congregations are larger, and where they had one they have now two church members." * Many years subsequently, Garrettson remarked: "I have heard it said, and that by those who were not very friendly to us, that we drive more to other churches than we draw to our own." † Thus Methodism, by its itinerancy, not only reached those whose souls were uncared for by others, but it stirred and strengthened the ministry and the churches that were already in the field.

The Annual Conference has ever been an important integral of the system of itinerancy. To it the early preachers repaired from their extensive circuits and districts to report the results of their work, and to receive from the Bishop new fields of labor. The Conferences in the early decades of the Church were often seasons of joy and of triumph. They were occasions of preaching and exhortation, of fasting, love-feast, prayer, and revival. The preachers heard and rejoiced in each other's success. They listened to the wise counsels of Asbury. They inspired and cheered one another. They welcomed new evangelists to their ranks, and wept as the candidates for

* "Experience and Travels of Garrettson." Philadelphia, 1791, pp. 247, 248.

† Semi-Centennial Sermon. 1826.

a place among them related their religious experience and their readiness to preach Christ.

It was the rule in the days of Asbury for applicants for admission to the itinerancy to give an account of their Christian life and to be questioned by him respecting it before the Conference. In May, 1791, William Colbert made the following record in his Journal: "Friday, 6. I appeared in the Conference, gave in my experience, and was examined by the Bishop." * Sometimes, if not always, the Conference sat with closed doors. In a letter to the Rev. William Colbert, dated Baltimore, April 16, 1805, Bishop Asbury said: "We have had gracious Conferences—strictly shut up and well disciplined. None but members admitted upon any consideration; no, not those upon trial." †

The itinerancy was organized to proclaim the great truths of the evangelical faith. The itinerants of Methodism preached "the eternal existence of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the total ignorance, wickedness, misery, and helplessness of fallen man by nature; the necessity of the remission of sins, and of a full renewal of the heart in righteousness and true holiness after the image of Him that created us; the infinite mercy and grace of God as the only source of man's redemption; and the atonement made by Jesus Christ for the sins of the whole world. They constantly affirmed that the complete mediatorial work of Christ is alone the meritorious and procuring cause of salvation; that whatever subordinate means may be employed, the Holy Spirit is the grand and proper agent in the work of grace in the heart; that repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ are necessary in order to the sinner's actual participation of pardon and eternal life; and that believers

* The Rev. William Colbert's manuscript Journal.

† Autograph letter of Asbury owned by Frank S. Petter, Esq., Jersey City, New Jersey.

must persevere unto the end in the exercises and practices of holiness, that their labor may not be in vain in the Lord." * They also preached the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the last day, the eternal punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous. These great doctrines were on every itinerant's tongue. In barns and kitchens, on the city street and the country highway, in the woods, in school-houses, in almshouses, and in chapels, the voices of the wandering heralds of a free salvation were eloquent of these mighty truths. They were the burden of their sermons and exhortations, their conversations, their prayers, and their songs.

The primitive itinerants taught these great truths in private as well as in public. They visited and exhorted the people at their firesides. The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, in his Semi-Centennial Sermon, said: "We called the family together, spoke to each person, and put up suitable prayers for their prosperity; and we seldom left a house at any time without prayer, and without giving the hand to each person, both white and colored, with a parting exhortation." They taught their people also in the class-meeting. After the sermon they almost always led the class, and thus they were informed of the religious state of the societies. It is noticeable in the manuscript Journal of the Rev. William Colbert how frequently he conducted class-meeting after preaching. On Thursday, the 12th of August, 1790, he records: "Visited the sick and met three classes, at John Wood's, Widow Russell's, and David Weem's."

In going forth to preach the doctrines they had espoused, the itinerants commonly suffered from exposure and hardship. Sylvester Hutchinson, who joined the itinerancy in 1789, and who was a traveling companion of Asbury for a time, "often stated to his son and

* This fine statement of the leading themes of Methodist preaching is found in the "Arminian Magazine," 1805, p. 235.

wife that he rode from fifty to sixty miles a day, and preached from one to three times, except Saturday, when he seldom preached more than once. His compensation, he said, was thirty dollars per annum, and often he did not get that. He was not accustomed to think what he wanted, but what he could not possibly do without." * Mr. Hutchinson's son, Daniel P. Hutchinson, many years ago, communicated to the author of this volume the fact that while Mr. Hutchinson was traveling in the north, he was attacked with winter fever, but continued to ride all day, taking calomel every two hours until he had taken eighty grains. One of the days in which he thus swallowed the drug he rode through the rain. If he stopped to rest he would fall so far behind his appointments that he could not overtake them. He was accustomed to rise at four o'clock and ride twenty miles before breakfast, sometimes reaching the place where he was to take his morning meal before the family had risen. He traveled through forests, over mountains, across rivers, in storms, sometimes on snow-drifts twenty or thirty feet deep, at other times almost buried in the huge drifts.

One of Hutchinson's fellow laborers, the Rev. William Colbert, speaks of going through snow-banks in Maryland in January, 1792. He says: "Friday, 20. I had a disagreeable ride from Edward Manifold's to John Low's through many banks of snow. O that I may patiently

'wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain.'"

In the same month, Colbert, who was then on Harford Circuit, met another trying episode. "Set out," he says, "from James Fisher's for Alexander Cooper's, but got lost by the way on Deer Creek, among the hills, bushes, and briars. I led my horse up and down the hills,

* The Rev. Henry B. Beegle, of the New Jersey Conference, letter to the author.

pulled down and put up one or two fences, and felt myself so fatigued that the sweat ran down my face, though the weather was cold and snow was on the ground. But what was worse than all, my horse went off from me while I was putting up a fence, and threw off the saddle and saddle-bags, which I had to take up, and waddle after him with them on my back through the snow. I thought myself well off that I soon came in sight of a house, and had got my horse, and was told it was only two miles from Cooper's. So I went on according to directions, got there, and undertook to preach from Ezek. xviii, 27." In respect to traveling in bad weather, Colbert said: "No weather a man can live in ought to stop him."

Of April 15, 1793, Mr. Colbert wrote: "Brother Ware and I rose early, and got into a boat at New Sheshequin, going down the river—which ran through the mountains at all points of the compass—till dark, when we stopped at a cabin by the river-side, where we could not get even straw to sleep on. However, Brother Ware fixed himself on a chest with a bunch of tow for his pillow. I suppose he thought himself well off. As for my part, I had to get the hay out of the boat for my bed, which a passenger begged a part of."

The question where and how he should pass the night in comfort and safety was not always easy for the itinerant to solve. Jesse Richardson traveled Lincoln Circuit, South Carolina, in 1790. One very cold evening about sunset he reached a house at which he sought entertainment. He was met by the master of the habitation with a harsh refusal. The next house was twelve miles distant, and between him and it a mountain intervened, over which there was no road, and the path was hidden by the snow which was falling. The preacher saw that he must have shelter in the abode of the heartless man, or freeze. He renewed his request, but, "No, you shall not," fell on his ear even more piercingly than the wintry blast.

With no alternative Richardson dismounted, tied his horse, and sat down shivering on the door-sill. The primitive itinerants loved to sing, and commonly they were gifted in song. Richardson began to sing. The man heard him, and soon said: "You seem to be quite merry, and you must be very cold, too. Would you not like to have a little fire?" "Thank you," said the itinerant," it is of all things what I most want, for it is, indeed, very cold." Fire was brought, and from the wood which lay in the yard he kindled a strong blaze. This brought the hardened man forth again, saying, "What are you doing out there, burning up all my wood? Put out that fire and come into the house." The preacher obeyed, and then said, "My horse has had nothing to eat since early this morning. If you will let me put him in the stable and feed him, you shall be well paid for it." This was refused, nor would he allow Richardson to eat, nor pray with the family. Denied a bed, the man of God lay down in his overcoat and slept before the fire. At early dawn, in cold and hunger, he departed.*

How an itinerant could win a night's entertainment by a song was shown by James Axley, a man of mark in the pioneer days. After traveling all day without dinner, evening found him at the house of a widow lady who did not welcome him. His application for entertainment was refused. Nothing seemed to promise him exemption from lodging in the woods, in an inclement season, without food. The good man lingered a little by the fire, and thought of his hard fare, hungry, chilled, and shelterless. Then his thoughts rose above his trials and his faith expatiated amid the riches of his celestial inheritance. In these inspiring musings his voice began to utter, in melodious cadences, the hymn,

"Peace, troubled soul, thou need'st not fear,
Thy great Provider still is near;

* Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina."

Who fed thee last, will feed thee still:
Be calm, and sink into his will."

As he sang his feelings became more elevated; "the vision of faith ranged above and beyond the desolate wilderness he had just been contemplating as the place of his night's sojourn. The family were soon all melted into tears. The lady called a servant and ordered him to put the gentleman's horse into the stable, and the daughter added, 'Be sure you feed him well.'" *

Not always did the itinerants obtain shelter at night. Samuel Coate was one of the most eloquent of that heroic band of wandering evangelists. In 1796 he was appointed to Columbia Circuit, New York Conference, but in the fall he went upon a mission to Canada. From Bay of Quinte he wrote to Bishop Asbury, April 22, 1797, saying, "It was with much reluctance that I turned out last fall, and through much difficulty came to this place. I had to endure wet and cold, and lay upon the ground three and twenty nights."† The saintly Hezekiah Calvin Wooster was Coate's companion in the wilderness, and shared his exposure. Wooster died in triumph about two years subsequently of pulmonary consumption.

In 1795 William Colbert was invited by his father to return from his wanderings and enjoy the comfort of the paternal abode, but the love of Christ impelled him onward. He says: "Rode to William Downing's, where I found a letter from my father, who, having been informed that I did not enjoy my health, has requested me to come home. But with this request it will not do to comply." A few months later he wrote: "Last night I laid down in sorrow, with some thoughts of traveling no more, as my mind is much distressed; but, thanks be to God! I awoke this morning somewhat refreshed. I want to do the will of God, and the will of God be done in me.

* The Rev. Dr. M'Tyeire in "Biographical Sketches."
† "The Methodist Magazine for the year 1798," Philadelphia.

'No foot of land do I possess;
A stranger in this wilderness:
A poor, wayfaring man,
I dwell awhile in tents below;
And, sorrowing, wander to and fro
Till I my Canaan gain.'

May the Lord enable me to be resigned to his will, under all the dispensations of his providence, however afflicting they may be!" *

The rough fare and frequent exposures of the American itinerants were sometimes followed by broken constitutions, and by even speedy death. In the spring of 1798 we meet Mr. Colbert at the bedside of a wounded and dying fellow-hero. "Thursday I spent," he says, "at John Miller's with Michael H. R. Wilson, a young man of talents promising usefulness, who appears to have but a short time to suffer here below. The hardships of Tioga Circuit, in all probability, have in him deprived the Church of a useful minister of the word of truth. But a God of infinite wisdom and goodness knows what is best for his servants and his cause. I have read but little, wishing to give as much of my company as I could to this son of affliction." †

Of this fallen evangelist the Rev. Henry Boehm, in his "Reminiscences," says: "Michael H. R. Wilson visited Lancaster County, and fell at his post while the dew of his youth was on him. He was from Maryland, and only twenty-eight years old when he died, April 24, 1798. He finished his course with joy at John Miller's, in Strasburg." Of Mr. Wilson's closing scene the Minutes say: "He was patient under affliction, enjoyed peace in his soul, and in a painful struggle with death he rejoiced in the Lord, being more than conqueror through Him that loved him."

* Journal in manuscript. The stanza as quoted by Colbert varies slightly from the common reading. I give it exactly as he wrote it.

† Colbert's Journal in manuscript.

Those brave Gospel trumpeters, who were worthy successors of the apostles, literally endured hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

At the General Conference of 1836, in Cincinnati, Nicholas Snethen and William Burke were present as spectators. Seated just outside the bar, those venerable men, who had seen pioneer service and hardship in the itinerancy, entered into conversation about the past. "'Altered times,' said Snethen to Burke, 'since you and I used to go to General Conference,' and in his clear, silvery tones he added: 'These brethren all look like they were well paid, well fed, and well clad; times have very much changed.' Burke replied in his coarse, harsh, and husky tones, 'I recollect, in the early days of Methodism, that I went one day into Nashville with a blanket coat on me, to preach in the market-house. It was not a blanket coat either; it was a blanket with a hole cut in the middle of it, and my head poked through the hole, and it was tied round me with a tow string. In that garb I preached to the people.' Then Snethen's silvery tones rang out, louder far than he was aware: 'I recollect,' said he, 'when I traveled up north on the Kennebec River that I was clad in a kind of Kentucky jean. My clothes were all threadbare, and my breeches were broken at the knees. I had not a dollar in the world. Where or how to get clothes I could not tell. I went home to my lodgings, took off my clothes, went to bed, and dreamed that I had no breeches at all.'"*

Burke, in his autobiography, gives a graphic view of his privations and trials in the itinerancy. In 1795 he traveled Hinkston Circuit, in Kentucky, half of the year; but of his work there he says: "Nothing occurred worthy of record except hard times. I had patch upon patch, and patch by patch, and I received only money sufficient to

* "Recollections of an Itinerant," by the Rev. George Brown, D.D. Cincinnati, 1866.

buy a waistcoat, and not enough of that to pay for the making."

The men whom the itinerant system sent abroad heroically faced scarcity, hardship, and perils. James Haw, as we have seen, was one of the first two itinerants that were appointed to Kentucky. "He wrote to us," says Dr. Coke, in his Journal, of the Virginia Conference of 1787, "a most enlivening account of the prospect in his district, and earnestly implored some further assistance. 'But observe,' added he, 'no one must be appointed for this country who is afraid to die! For there is now a war with the Indians, who frequently lurk behind the trees, shoot the travelers, and then scalp them; and we have one society on the very frontier of the Indian country.' After this letter was read a blessed young man (Brother Williamson) offered himself as a volunteer for this dangerous work. What can we not do or suffer when the love of Christ constrains!"

The Rev. James Jennings, a conspicuous Southern itinerant, wrote in 1834: "In the year 1792 I started as a pioneer of the Cross on the Cherokee Circuit, on the confines of South Carolina, exposed to the scalping knife of the Indian on one hand, and incessant toil and hunger on the other. This frontier circuit was then thinly settled, and a previous season of drought had created a scarcity of food amounting almost to famine. There were but three places in that extensive region where the preachers' horses could be fed with corn. Nevertheless we traveled, toiled, and preached, and suffered hunger joyfully for the sake of perishing souls. I recollect all the remuneration I received from the circuit above mentioned did not much exceed twenty-two dollars, and often since not much better." *

Though not in receipt of comfortable salaries those suffering itinerants had "souls for their hire." That was a compensation which they esteemed far above riches. Says Freeborn Garrettson: "I must mention the name of dear

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," May 30, 1834.

Caleb B. Pedicord, for he was an affectionate, good, and useful preacher, and was instrumental in bringing many souls to God.* When afflicted with hypochondria, to which he was subject, his mind would be in a state of great dejection; his usefulness would be hid from him; he would doubt his call to preach, and think of returning home. I remember a speech he made in a love-feast, during the sitting of the Conference in Baltimore, which moved the whole assembly. He arose, bathed in tears, and said: 'My friends, I have labored under heavy trials during the past year. I was afraid that I was doing no good, and that I was not called to preach; but a little before I left my circuit I went to a house where I met an old negro woman, who told me what I said to her on a former occasion had been the means of awakening her and bringing her to God. "I bless God," said she, "that ever I saw you, for now I am happy in religion." O,' said he, 'how greatly did this encourage me, for I thought it was better to gain one soul for Christ than to gain all the riches in the world. And now I am greatly encouraged to go forward in the good work, and, God being my helper, I will spend the remainder of my days wholly in his service.' After this he served the Church several years and then went home to glory."†

The early itinerants became familiar figures on the highways of the country. The grave, earnest countenance, the straight-breasted coat, the oil-skin covering of the hat, the leather saddle-bags, and the staid gait of the horse denoted the Methodist preacher, and usually they were "recognized by all that ever beheld or heard of one about as far as they were to be seen."‡ Such was their faithfulness in filling

* One of Pedicord's converts was Thomas Ware.

† Garrettson's Semi-Centennial Sermon. Pedicord's obituary was the first that appeared in the Minutes. It was inserted in 1785 as follows: "Caleb B. Pedicord—a man of sorrows; and, like his Master, acquainted with grief; but a man dead to the world, and much devoted to God."

‡ Raybold's "Annals of Methodism."

their appointments in the wide territory of their circuits that "of a bitterly cold winter it became almost a proverbial saying, 'There is nothing out to-day but crows and Methodist preachers.'" *

This is illustrated by the records of the itinerant toils of the Rev. William Colbert. He says that Sunday, February 22, 1794, was "a very rainy, cold morning," but adds: "However, I thought I must go to see if any came out to preaching. There were a few, to whom I preached with much freedom, thanks be to God! If very inclement weather stop the preacher when the people come to hear, they will be likely to stay at home when it is not so severe. Therefore, upon the whole, I find it best to go in all weathers." The last day of February, 1800, Colbert met "a very great snow-storm," and says: "The latter part of this day I rode from Thomas Rutter's to James Batten's, and preached in the school-house. Saturday, March 1, William Best and I set out in a furious snow-storm † from James Batten's to William Ball's, near a school-house, where I had an appointment to preach, but as the weather was so unfavorable and the school-house unoccupied, we had no meeting. We dined at William Ball's and proceeded to George Hoffman's, where I felt much indisposed by reason of a cold."

The itinerants did not only encounter snow-storms in winter, but also thunder-storms in summer. On Seneca Circuit, in June, 1797, Colbert says: "I was overtaken in a very lonesome place by a thunder-storm. The wind was blowing, the lightning blazing, the thunder rolling, and the rain so pouring that by looking up I could not see to escape the timber that was falling about me. I was wet enough when I got to my appointment, and found it well

* Raybold's "Annals of Methodism."

† Of course the snow was deep from the very great storm of the preceding day. This was on Chester and Strasburg Circuit, in Pennsylvania.

to get a dry corner to stand in to preach." Five days later he wrote: "I do not feel well. I believe it is because I am so much exposed to the weather." Soon afterward—July 18, 1797—this hero recorded the following statement: "I believe long rides through the mud where we cannot go out of a walk, being exposed to heavy rains, bad victuals, dirty houses, and sleepless nights in consequence of swarms of fleas, have been the cause of my sickness. But these are light things, and scarcely worthy of being put in the catalogue of what is suffered for Christ and the good of souls."

Asbury was foremost in braving toil, hardship, and peril. In 1788 he crossed the Alleghany mountains, and says: "Our course lay over mountains and through valleys, and the mud and mire were such as might scarcely be expected in December. We came to an old forsaken habitation in Tyger's Valley. Here our horses grazed about while we boiled our meat. Midnight brought us up at Jones's after riding forty, or perhaps fifty, miles. The old man, our host, was kind enough to wake us up at four o'clock in the morning. We journeyed on through devious, lonely wilds, where no food might be found, except what grew in the woods or was carried with us. We met with two women who were going to see their friends and attend the quarterly meeting at Clarksburg. Near midnight we stopped at A—s, who hissed his dogs at us; but we went in. Our supper was tea. Brothers Phœbus and Cook took to the woods. I lay along the floor on a few deer-skins with the fleas. That night our poor horses got no corn, and next morning they had to swim across the Monongahela. After a twenty-miles' ride we came to Clarksburg, and man and beast were so outdone that it took us ten hours to accomplish it. . . . My mind has been severely tried under the great fatigue endured both by myself and my horse. O, how glad should I be of a plain, clean plank to lie on, as preferable to most of the beds; and where the beds are in

a bad state the floors are worse." * Thus amid journeyings, labors, privations, poverty, sufferings, and perils, the itinerants of Methodism, with Asbury at their head, spread the Gospel over the land.

Notwithstanding all the toils and trials it involved, the early preachers viewed the itinerancy as one of the most glorious institutions of their Church. They believed it to be in accordance with the example of Christ and his apostles. An early and eminent itinerant, who wrote in its vindication, said: "When Jesus commenced his public ministry he became a traveling preacher. Thus he continued throughout the whole of his public ministry to set us an example. The apostles were willing to follow this example. For the sake of their heavenly Master they forsook houses and lands, and brethren and sisters, and fathers and mothers, going forth cheerfully to preach the Gospel; approving themselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watching, in fasting. They went forth preaching every-where the Gospel of the kingdom. And this they continued to do amid great distress and severe persecutions; for St. Paul says unto the Corinthians of his time: 'Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place.' Is there one word in the New Testament from which any thing can be inferred in favor of a settled ministry? I think there is not. The whole of this sacred book breathes the spirit of itinerancy, and all the transactions recorded in it, in reference to the ministry, agree with this spirit. That the continuance of a traveling ministry through all the ages of the world accords with the Divine will, is manifest from the promise with which Christ closes his last address to the ministers of his word, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.' 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

* "Journal," vol. ii, pp. 36, 37.

The command implies a traveling ministry, and the promise the continuance of it unto the end of the world." *

Asbury was strongly opposed to the plan of settling ministers. Of settled preachers he said: "Instead of *going* to preach they *stay* to preach." M'Kendree, the first preacher of American birth who was raised to the Superintendency, wrote in his diary, in 1790: "What can daunt my soul when Jesus says 'Go?' I'll run to and fro at his command, in ease or pain, and count the sufferings of this life not worth mentioning in comparison with the glories to be revealed." In a letter dated October, 1802, M'Kendree describes some striking scenes at the Miami quarterly meeting in the West, and relates an incident which shows how necessary was the itinerancy, of an old woman who, he says, was "sitting just behind me while Brother Smith was speaking." She "began in a low and mournful manner, and expressed herself to the following purport:

"'Lord, I have heard about these people and walked a long way to hear them. Yesterday, while the man was speaking, I felt very bad, and thought I should fall down; but, Lord, I was ashamed that the people should see me cry and fall down, so I was about to get into the woods and hide myself, for I did not know that it was the Lord. But I could not walk, I fell down among all the people, and all my shame went away! And now I am happy! Bless the Lord, he has converted my soul! O how light my heart is now, glory, glory to King Jesus. But O, Lord, my husband is wicked, my children are wicked! They must be converted, and there is no religion in the neighborhood. No one to tell them how to get converted. Lord, send some of these preachers that have the Spirit of God in their hearts into our neighborhood, to my house, to tell the people the way to heaven.'" M'Kendree adds: "This prayer so affected me that, at that time,

* The Rev. Wm. Beauchamp, posthumous "Letters on the Itinerancy."

I felt willing to preach the Gospel to the poor in every disconsolate corner."*

After he became a Bishop, M'Kendree wrote of the itinerancy thus: "The itinerant plan of preaching the Gospel, which was pursued by the apostles and their immediate successors, is undoubtedly better calculated to supply the poor with the glad tidings of salvation than any other, and, indeed, is the only plan adapted to the universal spread of the Gospel."†

The first Bishops, Coke and Asbury, in their "Notes on the Discipline," said: "Our grand plan in all its parts leads to an itinerant ministry. Our Bishops are traveling Bishops. All the different orders that compose our Conferences are employed in the traveling line, and our local preachers are in some degree traveling preachers. Every thing is kept moving as far as possible. And we will be bold to say, that next to the grace of God, there is nothing like this for keeping the whole body alive from the center to the circumference, and for the continual extension of that circumference on every hand."

The Bishops were not only advocates but inspiring examples of itinerancy. In a document addressed by Asbury, near the close of his life, to his only Episcopal colleague, M'Kendree, he said: "We can lay no claim to the Latin, Greek, English, Lutheran, Swedish, or Protestant Episcopal Church order. It will be seen that we are so unlike them that we could not stand as related to them. Would their Bishops ride five or six thousand miles in nine months for eighty dollars a year, with their traveling expense, less or more, preach daily when opportunity serves, meet a number of camp-meetings in the year, make arrangements for stationing seven hundred preachers, ordain a hundred more annually, ride through all kinds of weather, and

* "Extracts of Letters Containing Some Account of the Work of God Since the Year 1800." New York, 1805.

† Bishop M'Kendree on Church government, "Life," vol. ii, p. 356.

along roads in the worst state, at our time of life, the one sixty-nine and the other in his fifty-sixth year?" With respect to the itinerancy, Asbury further says: "Let local men ordain local men, baptize or rebaptize local men; we must shape our course otherwise, and try sacredly to maintain our traveling plan, and support a true, missionary, apostolic Church."

In going forth to preach from place to place, from State to State, and from State to Territory, the American itinerants believed that they followed the method of their Master and his apostles. Thus they were inspired to do and to dare. What cared Asbury and his heroic band for poverty, toil, deprivation, and danger, if so they might preach Christ and save men. Though their garments were thin and tattered, they were instrumental in clothing multitudes in white and fadeless robes. They suffered, but they made many joyful; they were poor, but they made many rich. What though they fell in the wilderness, thousands through their labors would become inhabitants of the golden Jerusalem. So they went forth weeping, bearing precious seed, assured that they should come again, amid the shoutings of harvest, bringing their sheaves.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN METHODISM.

IN the month that the Christmas Conference adjourned —January, 1785—Mr. Wesley published in his "Arminian Magazine" Robert Raikes's account of the origin of the Sunday-school. That account was dated the fifth of June, 1784, a little less than three months before Dr. Coke was set apart by Wesley as a Superintendent of the Methodist societies in the United States. The organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, therefore, was almost synchronous with the public announcement of the commencement of the Sunday-school movement. It may be doubted whether Dr. Coke, or any member of the Christmas Conference of 1784, had then heard of the Sunday-school, which was yet inchoate.

It is said that a young Methodist lady suggested the Sunday-school to Raikes, in Gloucester, England, in 1781. She also was one of his most efficient teachers, and subsequently became the wife of Samuel Bradburn, a celebrated Wesleyan preacher. Wesley not only published Raikes's account of the school which he originated in Gloucester, but the Methodists adopted the institution with happy results. They also taught without compensation.

Raikes's school in Gloucester was, in reality, a charity school. It was taught on Sunday by paid teachers, who inculcated secular knowledge as well as religious truth. The pupils were gathered from the streets, and were of the poor and neglected class. In addition to the instruction given in the school, they were taken to the Church once on the Sabbath, and a decided reformation among them was soon visible.

The Wesleyan Methodists employed the Sunday-school very soon after Raikes's account was published. They established a highly successful school in Bolton Le Moors prior to April, 1786, for at that time Wesley records in his Journal that the school contained five hundred and fifty children.

In 1787 Mr. Wesley visited the Sunday-school at Bolton, and wrote of it thus: "Here are eight hundred poor children taught in our Sunday-schools by about eighty masters, who receive no pay but what they are to receive from their great Master. About a hundred of them, part boys and part girls, are taught to sing, and they sing so true, that all singing together, they seemed to be but one voice. The house was thoroughly filled while I explained and applied the first and great commandment. What is all morality and religion without this? A mere castle in the air. In the evening, many of the children still hovering round the house, I desired forty or fifty to come in and sing, 'Vital spark of heavenly flame.' Although some of them were silent, not being able to sing for tears, yet the harmony was such as I believe could not be equaled in the king's chapel."

In September, 1788, a graphic description of that remarkable Sunday-school was published in the "Arminian Magazine." The account is of historical interest and is as follows:

"In the Methodist Sunday-school at Bolton Le Moors, there are about 800 scholars, 40 masters, and nearly as many assistants of one kind or other. All that are employed in this school (whatever their offices are) offer their services willingly without any pecuniary fee or reward. Every man stands close to his station and enters into the spirit of his work with an intention to do all the good in his power to the children under his care. The masters love the children and delight to instruct them. The children love their masters and cheerfully receive instruction.

It is about two years since they first began the school in our large, convenient chapel, and a great good attending the undertaking appears more and more daily. Not only in Bolton, but in the adjacent places from whence children come constantly to the school, and others who live in the country several miles off. Many of the poor children about Bolton have been greatly neglected in their education, and were almost a proverb for wickedness, especially Sabbath breaking, which crime is often the forerunner of the worst of evils.

"But we see at present the prospect of a glorious reformation. Among many who attend at our place there is already a great change in their manners, morals, and learning. They are taught to read and write by persons who are very well qualified for the work. Many of the children can read well in the Bible and write a tolerable hand, so that they are qualified for any common business. Their natural rusticity is also greatly worn off, and their behavior is modest and decent. About 100 are taught to sing the praises of God, in which they have made great proficiency, to the admiration of those who hear them. But what is better than all the rest, the principles of religion are instilled into their minds. The masters endeavor to impress them with the fear of God, and by that to make all vice and wickedness hateful to them, and urge them to obedience by the precepts and motives of the Gospel. Each class is spoken to separately every Sunday on the nature of religion, and are taught their duty to God, their neighbors, and themselves, when the instructions are enforced by serious counsels and solemn prayers." *

Such an early and successful instance of Sunday-school work shows that the Methodists were prompt to seize and zealous in developing Raikes's idea. An early historian of English Methodism says the Methodists "have had a principal hand, both in establishing and supporting the Sunday-

* "Arminian Magazine," 1788, pp. 489, 490.

schools in most parts of the nation. These schools are principally taught by Methodists, and that gratuitously." * Another Methodist historian of nearly the same, though later, date, states that in the year 1812 the Sunday-school work had reached such proportions that the Methodists in Great Britain, at that time, gave instruction on the Lord's day to "about 60,000 children." †

Not only did the English Methodists quickly appropriate and employ the Sunday-school, but they also contributed money to advance it. The fact was published in 1793 that in one year one hundred and fourteen pounds were contributed in the collections for Sunday-schools in the Methodist chapels in Manchester.‡

Methodists also inaugurated the Sunday-school movement in other lands. The first school of the kind "ever planted in Asia was established by Messrs. Harvard and Clough, Wesleyan missionaries at Ceylon." § It is also claimed that a Wesleyan Methodist, Mr. Charles, of Bala, "was either the first, or among the first, to introduce these schools into Wales; and to him is attributed the organization of that stupendous institution, 'The British and Foreign Bible Society,' which has been significantly called 'the blooming daughter of Sabbath-schools,' because the want of the Holy Scriptures in the Sabbath-schools of Wales, as communicated by Mr. Charles, gave origin to this great society." ‖

The Sunday-school was quickly incorporated into American Methodism. A Methodist Sunday-school was held in the house of Thomas Crenshaw, in Virginia, as early as 1786, and it is affirmed that "the first Sabbath-school

* Crowther's "True and Complete Portraiture of Methodism." London, 1811, p. 342.

† Myles's "Chronological History of the People called Methodists." London, 1813, p. 167.

‡ "Defense of the Methodists," by Joseph Benson. London, 1793.

§ "Methodist Magazine," 1828, p. 350. ‖ Ibid.

ever established in America was organized under the direction of Bishop Asbury, and the preachers in connection with him, for the benefit of the slaves of the South." * It is probable that this was the Sunday-school which was conducted at the house of Mr. Crenshaw. A colored pupil, John Charleston, was converted in Crenshaw's school, and became a devoted and successful preacher.

Charleston was quite a hero. The Rev. Stith Mead, who was his friend and benefactor, describes him thus: "I took with me round my circuit the last time, an African preacher, named John Charleston, a man whose liberty I had been instrumental in obtaining, by soliciting contributions for that purpose, between the years 1805 and 1809. This African brother has endured the test of Methodist scrutiny during a period of forty-one years, and has been a preacher of no ordinary rank for thirty-nine years. He was ordained a deacon by Bishop M'Kendree soon after his liberation from slavery. His conversion took place in a Sabbath-school, kept by Thomas Crenshaw, who is yet living, and has been a Methodist half a century. It was at Mr. Crenshaw's house, in Hanover County, that the Rev. F. Garrettson found an asylum in the Revolutionary War, when the British were plundering the county.

"The Rev. John Charleston is now in his sixty-first year, jet black, between six and seven feet in height, weighing 230 pounds, has short hair, inclining to be gray. During eighteen years of his life he would walk thirty miles in a day, and preach three times. He could not be stopped by trifles, would wade to his neck through streams of water. He had taught his dog to swim rivers and brooks, and carry his hymn book and Bible across in his mouth without getting them wet. He is a correct and powerful preacher. Hundreds and thousands have, I doubt not, been converted

* First Annual Report of the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church in "Methodist Magazine," 1828.

through his instrumentality. During his ministry he has been severely persecuted; but out of all his troubles the Lord has delivered him." This earliest Sunday-school in the United States of which any record is known was abundantly fruitful, even if it achieved no other result than the conversion of that colored youth.

The above account of Mr. Charleston was copied from "Zion's Herald" in "The Christian Advocate," February 22, 1828. As Mr. Mead, who wrote it, lived in Virginia—it is believed in Richmond—it would hardly have been carried from his hand to Boston in that day of slow conveyance so as to appear in a weekly journal, in much less time than a month. Then three or four weeks would have been a reasonable period for its re-appearance in another weekly journal in New York. It would, therefore, seem that the account of Mr. Charleston was written not later than near the close of 1827, or at the latest in the first days of 1828.* As he was converted forty-one years previous to the time of its writing, his conversion in Crenshaw's school must have occurred in 1786, or at the latest in the beginning of the year 1787. This determines the fact that Crenshaw's school was organized as early as 1786.† John Charleston was, so far as appears, *the first American Sunday-school convert.*

Only a little more than five years after the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized, Bishop Asbury held a Conference in the city of Charleston, and on February 16, 1790, he wrote from that city to his friend, the Rev. Thomas Morrell: "A design of establishing Sunday-schools for white and black children and adults is now

* Mr. Mead's account of Mr. Charleston is introduced in "Zion's Herald" as "a late communication," without giving its date.

† In the first report, 1828, of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday-School Union, the following statement appears: "In the year 1786 a Sabbath-school was taught in the house of our aged brother, Thomas Crenshaw, now living in Hanover County, Virginia, and in the following year—forty-one years ago—the Rev. John Charleston was converted to God in that school."

before the Conference." The next day, namely, February 17, 1790, he says in his Journal: "Our Conference resolved on establishing Sunday-schools for poor children, white and black." The great Sunday-school idea was then in the initial stage of its development, and the alert and sagacious Asbury helped to shape the growth of the powerful germ which Raikes planted and Wesley watered. Can it be shown that any other body of Christians in the United States had adopted the Sunday-school when, early in 1790, under the presidency of Bishop Asbury, the Charleston Conference committed American Methodism and American Christianity to that potential movement?

The first Sabbath-school in the United States, outside of Methodism, was not formed, so far as appears from any historical record, until two years after John Charleston began to preach. Hence the Methodist Episcopal Church had a Sunday-school in operation four years in advance of any other religious sect in America.

The most authoritative statement, probably, concerning the rise of Sunday-schools, other than Methodist, on the American continent, is that published in the "Biblical Repertory and Theological Review," in April, 1830. It is affirmed that "in the year 1791 the first Sabbath-school instituted in our country, as far as we can learn, was established in the city of Philadelphia. A meeting composed of 'the Right Rev. William White, D.D., Dr. Benjamin Rush, Dr. William Currie, Mr. Thomas Mendenhall, Mr. Thomas P. Cope, Captain Nathaniel Falconer, Mr. Sharpless, and others, was held on the 19th of December, 1790, for the purpose of taking into consideration the establishment of Sunday-schools in the city.' The measures adopted at that meeting led to the foundation of the First Day or Sunday-School Society, on the 11th of January, 1791. This society supported three schools for many years, and employed teachers whose salaries were paid from its funds, which were raised from the voluntary contributions of its

managers and friends. From 1791 to 1800 more than two thousand pupils were admitted into these schools, and during the nineteen years' existence of the institution before 1810, seven thousand six hundred and thirty-nine dollars and sixty-three cents were received into its treasury, and almost wholly expended in paying teachers' wages. The society, we believe, continued to employ teachers until 1815, when, as far as we know, the practice entirely ceased in this country.

"In the meantime Sabbath-schools were slowly introduced into various other places. In New York they were commenced by the late excellent Isabella Graham, and Mr. Bethune, in the year 1803, and about the same time in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and in other towns and cities. About the year 1816 the institution began to be more generally known and introduced by means of the intelligence which was diffused through the medium of religious newspapers, which were commenced about that period. In the year 1817 'The Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union' was formed. This society commenced with about five thousand scholars, and at the expiration of seven years had nearly fifty-six thousand children in its connection. One of the principal objects of this Union was to supply the neighboring schools with the requisite books and apparatus of the best kind, and at the least expense; and the advantages of such an establishment were so obvious, that in a few years auxiliaries to this society, of every sect, were found scattered through seventeen States, and its publications during the last year of its existence exceeded two hundred and ten thousand, consisting of reward books, spelling books, etc., for the use of the schools. Having thus become national in character, not by any wise scheme of man, but imperceptibly and unexpectedly—a fact which itself proves the necessity of such an institution—the society assumed a general name, in conformity with the wishes, and at the suggestion, in-

deed, of several large unions, in different parts of the country, which proposed to co-operate with it. Accordingly, on the 25th of May, 1824, the American Sunday-School Union was formed in the city of Philadelphia."

Thus it appears that the Sunday-school movement in this country, outside of the Methodist Episcopal Church, began with the organization of a society, January 11, 1791, in Philadelphia. It is equally clear that Methodism was reaping the fruit of its labor in this field of Christian effort in the conversion and successful ministry of John Charleston years before that date.

In the Annual Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the year 1790 it was said: "Let us labor as the heart and soul of one man to establish Sunday-schools in or near the place of public worship. Let persons be appointed by the Bishops, elders, deacons, or preachers, to teach (gratis) all that will attend and have a capacity to learn; from six in the morning till ten, and from two o'clock in the afternoon till six, where it does not interfere with public worship. The council shall compile a proper school book to teach them learning and piety." * Lee, the first historian of the Church, states that "after this, Sunday-schools were established in several places, and the teachers took nothing for their services." Thus the Methodist Episcopal Church was also the first to employ gratuitous teachers.

The Rev. Thomas Ware speaks of the extraordinary increase of members reported at the Conferences of 1790, and then says: "But there were many lambs of the flock, and the question occurred, what can be done for these?"

"We had made it a point in visiting families, to attend especially to the children, to converse with them about Jesus, and to impress upon the minds of parents the importance of a religious care for the spiritual health of their offspring. We now resolved as the heart of one man to

* Lee's "History of the Methodists," p. 163.

establish Sunday-schools. Our impression was that by these, many, very many, of the rising generation might be secured on the side of virtue and religion. But we erred in confining these schools chiefly to the poor, and to the acquisition of human learning. Our success was not, therefore, commensurate with our confident expectations." *

One of the preachers who early established Sunday-schools was the Rev. John Andrew, whose son, James O. Andrew, became a Bishop. Andrew was the first native of Georgia who joined the Methodist itinerancy. He was admitted on trial in 1789, and traveled only three years, when he located. He never returned to the regular work. His son, the Bishop, said of him: "He instituted a number of Sabbath-schools in his circuit, especially the last year that he traveled, and when he became local, he pursued the same plan where it was practicable." This testimony proves that Sunday-schools were in operation at several places in the South as early as the Conference year 1791–2.

One of the most holy and eloquent preachers Methodism raised up in South Carolina was George Dougharty. Says one who knew him, "His mind was like an orb of light on which no perceptible shadows ever fell." † Another describes him as an "almost unequaled man of God, and minister of Jesus Christ." ‡ His preaching attracted wide attention and made a profound impression. He was a favorite of Bishop Asbury, who, in the year 1800, appointed him to Charleston. The first report of the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church says: "By a letter lately received from the Rev. Stith Mead, an old veteran of the cross, we learn that the Rev. George Dougharty, stationed preacher at Charleston, S. C., was severely beaten on the head with a

* "Life of Ware," pp. 183, 184.

† The Rev. Dr. Lovick Peirce in Sprague's "Annals."

‡ The Rev. J. O. Andrew.

club, and subsequently had water pumped on him from a public cistern, for the crime of conducting a Sabbath-school for the benefit of African children."* Stith Mead wrote to the editors of the "Christian Advocate and Journal" from Lynchburg, Virginia, September 12, 1828, as follows: "Having discovered in your publications a notice of some information I have communicated to you on the subject of Sunday-schools, I now transmit for your perusal a copy of a letter from the Rev. George Dougharty to Bishops Asbury, Coke, and Whatcoat, which will serve to confirm what has been published of the origin of Sunday-schools through the instrumentality of the Wesleyan Methodists in America."

The letter of Dougharty, of which Mr. Mead here speaks, is dated Charleston, May 25, 1801, and is as follows: "My black school has increased to upwards of forty, several of whom have discovered an excellent capacity in learning, but you will readily believe that this has no tendency to remove the reproach of the cross. The epithet of *negro school-master*, added to that of Methodist preacher, makes a black compound, sure enough. Yet, wonderful to think! the congregations are as large and as serious as they were at any time since I came to Charleston. The number of blacks that attend on the Sabbath is truly pleasing, yet, alas! I cannot say there is any revival. But I humbly hope the storms in Charleston have taught me some useful lessons. Outward persecutions seem to abate, and I am again cheered with the sight of some black faces in the galleries at night."

Mr. Mead is good authority concerning Mr. Dougharty, for they were associated as members of the same Conference at the time of or very soon after Dougharty's persecution. From the account of the mob and its victim, given by the Rev. F. A. Mood, in his volume on "Methodism in Charleston," it would appear that the atrocious

* "Methodist Magazine," 1828, pp. 350, 351.

affair at the pump occurred in the winter of 1800–1, about sixteen years after the organization of American Methodism into a Church, and before Dougharty wrote the above letter which has an allusion to the persecution.

In regard to that painful event the Rev. Nicholas Snethen, in a biographical sketch of Mr. Dougharty, which was published in 1823, says: "I well remember the morning, twenty-three years ago,* and the conversation, when Mr. Asbury was about to leave Charleston, and Mr. Dougharty in charge of the society. In allusion to the large number of colored members, 'I leave you,' said he, 'a flower garden and a kitchen garden to cultivate;' and, following out the simile, he pointed to him the importance of attention to the blacks. The greater pleasure would be derived from an attention to the masters—the greater advantage from attention to the slaves. Mr. Dougharty was not satisfied with laboring for the adult slaves only; he established a school for the black children. In a letter to Mr. Asbury he observes: 'I do not only suffer the reproach common to Methodist preachers, but I have rendered myself still more vile [odious] as the negro school-master.' His success was too great to be endured by the jealous authorities. The alarm was spread among the populace. But, as the school-master would take no hint to abandon his sable pupils, the mob assembled in great numbers, on a Sunday evening, in Cumberland Street before the church. The preacher was forcibly hurried from the pulpit into the midst of the mob, who seem not to have made their arrangement how to dispose of their victim. A pause ensued, and while several proposals were making, a voice was heard above the rest, '*To the pump!*' 'To the pump!' was now the general cry. The pump stood in Church Street, near the corner of Cumberland Street, not many yards distant from the church. Mr. Dougharty was hurried on toward it by the multitude, and thrown down so as to receive its

* Mr. Snethen at that time was the companion of Bishop Asbury.

whole contents, until the frenzy of the mob began to abate. He was then suffered to return to his lodgings, I believe unruffled with any unholy emotion of heart. He used to relate the event with the utmost composure."

With respect to the mob Mood, in his "Methodism in Charleston," says: "He was seized by the mob, and though winter time and he a man of feeble health, they thrust him under a spout near the church, and pumped him almost to drowning. In the midst of their work of cruelty, while some of the members in affright had fled, and others stood by unable to give assistance, a Mrs. Kugley rushed into their midst, and tearing off her apron, pushed it into the pump spout, and commanded them to desist. At the same time, a gentleman forcing his way into their midst, sword in hand, threatened death to any one who should touch Mr. Dougharty's person. The crowd of bullies instantly made a precipitate retreat."

Mr. Snethen further says of the persecuted minister: "No man was better entitled to the name of good-natured than George Dougharty. Though he was never still, he was always complaisant. This enviable constitutional temperament, so rarely to be found, conciliated to him the esteem of all, and enabled him with great facility to triumph over the madness of the people. None but a mob would have had the resolution to lay hands upon him, and even their hearts seem to have misgave them."*

The Rev. J. O. Andrew, subsequently bishop, in writing, in 1830, of this cruelty to Mr. Dougharty says: "Of all the principal leaders in this outrageous proceeding, not

* Fairness requires that I should state that the Rev. J. O. Andrew, and also Mood, claim that the pumping of Dougharty was occasioned by the fact that it became known that a package of abolition documents had been sent to the Rev. John Harper, a Methodist preacher in Charleston at the time, who in the presence of a witness consigned them to the fire. Dougharty being at the church that night the mob, they say, took *him*. The Rev. Stith Mead and the Rev. Nicholas Snethen, both contemporaries and personal friends of Dougharty, are good authorities.

one prospered afterward. Most of them died miserable deaths in a short time. One of them lived some time only to feel and acknowledge that the curse of God was on him for his conduct to that good man."

It is said that the effect of Mr. Dougharty's drenching was to develop pulmonary disease which finally terminated his life. He devoted his failing strength to his Master's work. Shortly before his death this Sunday-school martyr attended a camp-meeting, though not able to preach. "On the Sabbath of the meeting, after another had preached, he arose and propped himself against the book-stand, and leaning forward, said: 'Brethren, this is the last time you will ever recognize my presence among you; but next year when you have a camp-meeting here I will ask my heavenly Father to permit my mingling with you around that altar; and, although in person you will not see me, I expect to be with you in spirit, rejoicing and praising God.' The effect on the congregation was awfully sublime and glorious. For some minutes a death-like silence of weeping prevailed; but soon a loud burst of 'Glory! glory to God!' resounded through the congregation. From this camp-meeting he went on to Wilmington, and in a few weeks he there expired, shouting, with his gasping breath, 'Glory! glory!'" * Thus he ascended to heaven, March 23, 1807.

The evidence that American Methodism was very early in the field of Sunday-school labor is decisive. Indeed it seems clear, beyond dispute, that Methodism inaugurated the Sunday-school movement in the United States.

A Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized April 2, 1827, and the ensuing General Conference accepted it. The first report of the Union, in 1828, showed that there were then in the Methodist Episcopal Church one thousand and twenty-four Sunday-schools, having ten thousand two hundred and ninety teachers, and sixty-three thousand two hundred and forty

* "Autobiography of the Rev. Joseph Travis, A.M."

scholars.* It also showed that provision had been made for a Sunday-school literature, which, in the later development of the institution, has become so immense.

The great American Bishop on horseback, Asbury, was ever awake to see and prompt to seize methods which promised to promote the edification of the Church of which he was the overseer. In the Sunday-school he discerned that potency which many were not so quick to discover, and which, since his day, has been so wondrously revealed. He accepted it, and his Church, which he led in every department of evangelical labor, employed it. Thus the Sunday-school in America has grown with the growth and strengthened with the strength of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

* It does not follow that these were all the schools and scholars in the Church at that time. The numbers given were those then known to the Sunday-School Union.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW CHURCH AND EDUCATION.

EDUCATION was one of the subjects which engaged the attention of the Christmas Conference. A proposition to establish a college at Abingdon, Maryland, was favorably considered. Before the Conference assembled the project was canvassed by Coke and Asbury, who were convinced of its importance. They saw that to insure the rapid and permanent progress of religion, it must be allied with intelligence. Religion, without culture, is liable to fall into the embrace of superstition, while culture acquired in schools that are wholly secular is likely to become the foe of Christianity. Therefore means were promptly adopted to found a school in which the youth of Methodism could be educated under the eye and hand of the Church. Prior to the Christmas Conference the two Superintendents appointed by Mr. Wesley solicited subscriptions for a college. Mr. Asbury's design was to found a school, but Dr. Coke advocated a more imposing scheme. In 1780 a plan for a school was formed, for which John Dickins drew up a subscription. It was developed at the instance of Dr. Coke into Cokesbury College. Asbury's view was, no doubt, more judicious, but Coke's wish prevailed. Mr. Asbury deferred to Dr. Coke probably because of his knowledge of scholastic affairs. So ten days before the Conference Coke wrote in his Journal: "We crossed the bay, and at the other side were met by Mr. Dallam. I have prevailed upon him to give in land £250 currency toward the college, (for that is to be its name.) Mr. Asbury met me this side of the bay. Between us, we have got £1,000 sterling subscribed

toward the college." Before the Superintendents left the seat of the Christmas Conference, they prepared a prospectus of the proposed college, to which they appended the statement that they had "already been favored with subscriptions amounting to £1,057 17s. sterling." The prospectus was as follows:

"*A plan for erecting a college, intended to advance religion in America, to be presented to the principal members and friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church:*

"The college is to be built at Abingdon, in Maryland, on a healthy spot, enjoying a fine air and very extensive prospect. It is to receive for education and board the sons of the elders and preachers of the Methodist Church, poor orphans, and the sons of the subscribers and of other friends. It will be expected that all our friends who send their children to the college, will, if they be able, pay a moderate sum for their education and board; the rest will be taught and boarded, and, if our finances will allow of it, clothed, gratis. The institution is also intended for the benefit of our young men who are called to preach, that they may receive a measure of that improvement which is highly expedient as a preparative for public service. A teacher of the languages, with an usher, will be provided, as also an English master to teach with the utmost propriety both to read and speak the English language; nor shall any other branch of literature be omitted which may be thought necessary for any of the students. Above all, special care shall be taken that due attention be paid to the religion and morals of the children; and to the exclusion of all such as continue of an ungovernable temper. The college shall be under the presidentship of the Superintendents of our Church for the time being; and it is to be supported by yearly collections, throughout our circuits, and any endowments which our friends may think proper to give and bequeath,

consistently with the laws of the respective States in which they are made. The buildings, if it please God, will be begun in next June, and the subscribers are desired to send in their subscriptions, as far as it is convenient, to any of our ministers or preachers in the intermediate space; but wherever it is inconvenient we will most cheerfully wait the subscriber's time.

"Three objects of considerable magnitude we have in view in the erection of this college.

"The first is a provision for the sons of our married ministers and preachers.

"The wisdom and love of God have now thrust out a large number of laborers into his harvest; men who desire nothing on earth but to promote the glory of God by saving their own souls and those that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual things are willing to minister to them of their carnal things; so that they *have food to eat and raiment to put on*, and are content therewith.

"A competent provision is likewise made for the wives of married preachers, and an allowance over and above for their little children.

"Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those that have boys, when they are grown too big to be under their mother's direction. Having no father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this is one motive that induces us to lay before our friends the present plan; that these little ones may have all the instruction they are capable of, together with all things necessary for the body.

"In this view, our college will become one of the noblest charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the institution? Is it fit that the children of those who leave wife and all that is dear to save souls from death should want what is needful either for the soul or body? Ought we not to supply what the parent cannot, because

of his labors in the Gospel? How excellent would be the effect of this institution? The preacher, eased of this weight, can the more cheerfully go on in his labor, and perhaps many of these children may hereafter fill up the place of those that shall *rest from their labors.*

"The second object we have in view is the education and support of poor orphans, and surely we need not enumerate the many happy consequences arising from such a charity. Innumerable blessings center in it. Not only the immediate relief of the objects of our charity, but the ability given them, under the providence of God, to provide for themselves through the remainder of their lives.

"The last, though, perhaps, not the least, object in view is the establishment of a seminary for the children of our competent friends, where learning and religion may go hand in hand; where every advantage may be obtained which may promote the prosperity of the present life, without endangering the morals and religion of the children through those temptations to which they are too much exposed in most of the public schools. This is an object of importance indeed, and here all the tenderest feelings of the parent's heart range on our side.

"But the expense of such an undertaking will be very large, and the best means we could think of at our late Conference to accomplish our design was, to desire the assistance of all those in every place who wish well to the work of God; who long to see sinners converted to God, and the Kingdom of Christ set up in all the earth.

"All who are thus minded, and more especially our own friends who form our congregations, have an opportunity now of showing their love to the Gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest charities in the world. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent designs that ever was set on foot in this country. Do what you can to comfort the parents who give up their all for you, and to give their children cause to bless you.

You will be no poorer for what you do on such an occasion. God is a good paymaster. And you know in doing this you lend unto the Lord; in due time he shall repay you.

THOMAS COKE,
FRANCIS ASBURY.

BALTIMORE, *January* 3, 1785.

Two days after the Conference rose Dr. Coke was in Abingdon. He there ordered the materials for the structure. On the 30th of May, 1785, but a short time before he returned to England, he and Asbury were again at Abingdon. It appears that the ground which, according to Dr. Coke, Mr. Dallam had promised to donate for the college, was in another place, or he had canceled his promise, or some other fact about which there is no information was involved in the transaction; for Coke records that they "agreed to give Mr. Dallam £60 sterling for four acres of ground, which we had fixed upon as the site of our college, and had proper bonds drawn up."

Almost three quarters of a century subsequently a living authority, namely, David Creamer, Esq., of Baltimore, visited the spot. He says, "The village of Abingdon contains a population of three or four hundred inhabitants, is situated in Harford County, Maryland, just twenty-two miles north-east of Baltimore, and about fourteen miles east of Bellair, the county town. The old Philadelphia turn-pike road passes through the village. The location is high and healthful, and from the loftiest point, on which stood the "stately edifice" of Cokesbury College, embraces views of Bush River, which, we think, Dr. Coke mistook for the Susquehanna or Chesapeake Bay. We, however, are not sure of this, and will insert the doctor's enraptured description. He says: 'The situation delights me more than ever. There is not, I believe, a point of it, from whence the eye has not a view of at least twenty miles; and in some parts the prospect extends to even fifty miles. The water forms one of the

most beautiful views in the United States; the Chesapeake Bay, in all its grandeur, with a fine, navigable river, the Susquehanna, which empties itself into it, lying exposed to view through a great extent of country.'

"It seems a pity even to imagine a defect in the doctor's picture, which, perhaps, was sketched from the cupola of the college; but truth compels us to say, that, standing on the college site, we were unable, with the naked eye, to discover either the Susquehanna or Chesapeake. Though the Susquehanna is, indeed, a 'fine river,' it is navigable only five or six miles above its mouth. If the doctor really could discern both the bay and river, as he states, it must have been at their junction, where the river is navigable."*

The foundation of the edifice was laid in 1785, and it had progressed so far as to be "fit for covering" in May, 1786. In August of that year Mr. Asbury was at Abingdon, and speaks of the college as "without a cover." Four months later he was again there, accompanied by Dr. Coke, at which time he states that upward of two thousand pounds had been expended upon the enterprise. It was then decided to finish two rooms and procure a president. It appears probable that students were examined for admission in September, 1787, for in that month Asbury says he "hasted to Cokesbury, it being the examination." On the 6th of December, 1787, the college was formally opened, and twenty-five students were admitted. On that day, which was Thursday, Asbury preached on "Trust in the Lord and do good." On the Sabbath he again preached, on the text: "O man of God, there is death in the pot." On Monday he gave another sermon, from "They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." The building was not then completed.

* "Last Brick from Cokesbury College," by David Creamer, in "The Methodist," Sept. 21, 1861.

The name given to the college was Cokesbury, which was derived from the names of the two Superintendents. The institution was an experiment. The American Methodists were without experience in managing schools, and the beginnings of Cokesbury were unfortunate. There was some difficulty in its management the first year, for in August, 1788, Mr. Asbury heard that both of the teachers had gone, "one for incompetency, and the other to pursue riches and honors." A result, however, which has ever followed the educational labors of Methodism, was soon visible; for in May, 1789, Asbury records that "God was working among the students."

The two Superintendents visited the college in May, 1789. Dr. Coke describes its internal *status*. He says: "I had several long conversations with Dr. Hall, our president, and am satisfied beyond a doubt that he is the scholar, the philosopher, and the gentleman. He truly fears God, and pays a most exact and delicate attention to all the rules of the institution. Our classic tutor is a very promising person. He is not the polished scholar, like the president, but his manifest strength of understanding and persevering diligence will soon, I doubt not, perfect every thing that is wanting. And our English and mathematical master gives us considerable satisfaction.

"On Saturday morning I examined all the classes in private; and in the afternoon we had a public exhibition of the different abilities and improvement of our young students. Two young men displayed great strength of memory, and great propriety of pronunciation, in the repetition of two chapters of Sheridan on Elocution, and were rewarded by Mr. Asbury, as a small testimony of our approbation, with a dollar a piece. One little boy, a son of Mr. Dallam's, a neighboring gentleman, delivered *memoriter* a fine speech out of Livy, with such a heroic spirit and with such great propriety, that I presented him with a little piece of gold. Three other boys, also, so excelled

in gardening, that Mr. Asbury rewarded them with a dollar each. But, what is best of all, many of them are truly awakened. However, we were oblighed to undertake the painful task, in the presence of the trustees, masters, and students, of solemnly expelling a young lad of fifteen years of age, to whose learning we had no objection, but whose trifling, irreligious conduct and open ridicule among the students of experimental religion we could not pass over, as we are determined to have a college in which religion and learning shall go hand in hand together, or to have none at all. But nothing relating to this institution, perhaps, has given me greater pleasure than to find we are already enabled to support four students fully and two in part (preachers' sons and orphans) on the charitable foundation." *

An account of the financial condition of the enterprise, and a description of the building, was published in the latter part of the year 1789 as follows: "Not doubting but it will afford great satisfaction to the subscribers and friends of Cokesbury College to have some particular account of its present condition, we have, therefore, subjoined a brief relation of its state in the month of September, 1789. The accounts which have been brought against it are as follows:

For building	£3,857	0	4½
For tuition	412	10	7
For furniture and housekeeping	217	18	8
Total	£4,487	9	7½

"Out of which the following sums have been paid:

For building	£2,263	11	4½
For tuition	369	19	2
For furniture and housekeeping	217	17	8
Total	£2,851	8	2½
The debt, which is still due, is	1,636	1	5
Total	£4,487	9	7½

* Journals of Dr. Coke's "Five Visits to America," pp. 111, 112.

"This college is one hundred and eight feet in length from east to west, and forty feet in breadth from north to south, and stands on the summit and center of six acres of land, with an equal descent and proportion of ground on each side. The whole building is well painted on the outside, and the windows completely glazed. The house is divided into rooms as follows: At the west end are two rooms on the lower floor, each twenty-five feet by twenty. The second and third stories the same. At the east end are two rooms, each twenty-five feet by twenty. The second and third stories the same. In the middle of the lower floor is the college hall, forty feet square, and over that on the second floor two school-rooms, and on the third floor two bed-chambers. At the ends of the hall are spaces for four sets of staircases, two at the north end, and two at the south end, with proper doors opening on the staircases. The carpenter's work on the first and second floors with one staircase is almost completed. The plastering and painting of four rooms at the west end are nearly finished. The school-rooms are also chiefly done, and one room at the east end partly plastered.

"There are ten boys who are wholly or partially upon charity, several of whom are maintained, clothed, and educated gratis. There are also twenty independent scholars."

It thus appears that in September, 1789, there were thirty students in the college, a third of whom were charity scholars. One student at least had already gone forth into the itinerancy, whose name became celebrated and historic in the Church. Valentine Cook, who laid the foundation of his scholarship at Cokesbury, shone as a bright, particular star in the splendid galaxy of mighty preachers that so quickly rose in the firmament of the young Church. Mr. Cook, it is true, was not a scholar in the sense that Wesley was a scholar, but, as "compared with forty-nine fiftieths of the then traveling and local ministers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, he was very

justly regarded as a man of learning." The Rev. Thomas Scott formed Cook's acquaintance in the autumn of 1789, and he says that at that time Mr. Cook "possessed a thorough knowledge of the English language, and had made some proficiency in the German, as well as in the Latin and Greek languages. Portions of each successive day were, so far as practicable, devoted to the study of the German and Greek, and toward the close of that Conference year he informed me that he had made such progress in the German as to be able to preach in it." Cook's extraordinary preaching and its effects are historic.

It is probable that the above statement of the affairs of Cokesbury College, which was printed in the American "Arminian Magazine," was written by Bishop Asbury, as about the time it was prepared, September, 1789, he visited the institution. In connection with this visit he records the happy death of a pious student. "He praised God to the last," says Asbury. His death produced a solemn impression upon his fellow-students.

In December, 1790, the number of students had increased to forty-five, all of whom were boys. The subscriptions for the institution had then reached the sum of three hundred pounds per annum. The school soon became involved in financial complications, which put to a severe test the skill and patience of Asbury. In May, 1786, he says: "We are already in debt nearly £900, and money is scarce." In September, 1788, he devoted three days to an examination and adjustment of the affairs of the institution. In May, 1791, he was confronted with further problems of finance, for he says: "I found there was a vast demand for money for the establishment, there having been an expenditure of £700 in five months." In October, 1794, Bishop Asbury held the New York Conference, and says: "At this Conference it was resolved that nothing but an English free day-school should be kept at Cokesbury." In November, 1794, he says: "Our col-

legiate matters now come to a crisis. We now make a sudden and dead pause. We mean to incorporate and breathe, and take some better plan. If we cannot have a Christian school, (that is, a school under Christian discipline and pious teachers,) we will have none." This language suggests that the religious tone of the school was impaired; a result, perhaps, of the difficulty of securing teachers who were both competent and holy. The Rev. William Colbert records that the 29th of November, 1791, he spent at Abingdon, and says: "In the afternoon, there was a public exhibition in the College Hall. Part of it I liked much; and part, I think, was too theatrical to be allowed in the college of a people that make so high a profession of religion as the Methodists do."

In October, 1795, but a few weeks before its destruction, an inventory of the assets of the college was taken, the total amount of which was "seven thousand one hundred and four pounds twelve shillings and ninepence." *

Asbury not only bore the chief financial burden of the enterprise, but he also was responsible for its internal management. The price of board; the teachers, their selection, work, and compensation; the students, their physical, moral, and religious welfare, as well as their intellectual improvement, all were a constant and weighty care to the overburdened Superintendent. Asbury wrote his parents: "I have had the burden of a school, hastily called a college by Dr. Coke. I gave that up into the hands of trustees made by law." He watched for promising youth whom he might send to the college. For example, he writes in Virginia, the 14th of December, 1790, thus: "Finding Tommy (a son of Mr. W.'s) had genius, I gave him a pass to Cokesbury." Not far from this time he wrote to Mr. Morrell: "Our school is in good order. I expect to place thirteen boys on the charity of the college." The expense attending the maintenance of charity scholars involved

* Asbury's "Journal," vol. ii, p. 280.

Bishop Asbury and the institution in additional straits. In January, 1791, Asbury wrote to Morrell: "Our family is very large at college; if you can lift a few dollar subscriptions it will be acceptable." In the same year he says that in Baltimore he "went from house to house through the snow and cold begging money for the support of the poor orphans at Cokesbury."

There were, however, compensations for all the labor and sacrifice, as a record in the Journal of Asbury shows: "I lodged," he says, "with Abel Bliss, whose son was educated, *and not spoiled*, at Cokesbury." The influence of the institution was felt by the denomination. It demonstrated the fact that American Methodism was not only in sympathy with education, but ready also to undergo labors and sacrifices to promote it. The Methodist Episcopal Church is forever richer from the intellectual impulse it received from Cokesbury College. Its very ruins are monumental of the far-sighted wisdom of the fathers of the Church in joining the work of education with their absorbing evangelical labors. Had it not burned, Cokesbury would, perhaps, with the rapid progress of the denomination, have developed into a commanding institution; but on the 7th of December, 1795, according to Asbury, it was consumed. The Rev. William Colbert, however, records in his journal that on Saturday, December 5, 1795, he rode to Baltimore, "where," he says, "I heard of the conflagration of Cokesbury College." The next day he wrote: "Sunday, 6. Rode from Baltimore to Fork Chapel and preached from 1 John xi, 5, to a small congregation, and rode to Abingdon where I saw the ruins of Cokesbury College."* When, in Charleston, Asbury learned positively of the catastrophe he wrote: "Would any man give me £10,000 per year to do and

* Colbert's Journal in manuscript. Colbert does not give the precise date of the fire, but merely the dates on which he heard of the disaster and viewed the ruins of the edifice.

suffer again what I have done for that house, I would not do it." Subsequently he said: "As to the college, it was all pain and no profit to me, but some expense and great labor." *

On receiving the account of the calamity, Dr. Coke wrote: "Not only the building, but the library and all the philosophical apparatus were entirely destroyed; and, what is the most trying consideration, I doubt not it was done on purpose. The governor of the State advertised one thousand dollars reward for the discovery of the person or persons who perpetrated the deed, but all in vain. The gentry, for many miles round, also lamented the loss, not only from more liberal motives, but on account also of the instruction and entertainment they had received, in being admitted with tickets to the philosophical lectures of Dr. Hall, the president." Though incendiarism was suspected, a competent authority, the Rev. Nicholas Snethen, states that the cause of the fire "was never known."

Asbury now expressed the belief that God had not called the Methodists to the work of collegiate education. The Church in Baltimore, however, was still zealous for the enterprise. The material structure was in ashes, but the spirit which gave it existence survived. "Seventeen of our principal friends in the Baltimore society," says Dr. Coke, "met together, and, thinking that the honor and credit of the Connection demanded exertion to supply the place of Cokesbury, they immediately subscribed £1,700 currency (£1,020 sterling) toward the erecting of a new college. They then applied to the proprietor of a large building in Baltimore, which had been erected for balls, concerts, card parties, etc., for the use of the city, (for Baltimore has been lately constituted a city,) in order to purchase it. This building, which was then vacant, and, I think, the handsomest in the city, they purchased for £5,300. The society at large subscribed £700, and the inhabitants

* Letter to the Rev. John Dickins.

of the city, upon an application from house to house, £600; and the above mentioned seventeen went security for the remaining £2,300. The college or academy was accordingly fitted up, masters were appointed, and the whole city seemed to take pleasure in sending their young people to this seminary, which soon flourished beyond what Cokesbury had ever done."*

The school in Baltimore was quickly in vigorous and successful operation. A little more than seven months after the conflagration at Abingdon, Bishop Asbury found "the academy crowded," having "five teachers and nearly two hundred scholars." The literary spirit of the new Church received inspiration from its baptism of fire. The school was borne on wings of flame from a small hamlet to the metropolitan city of the denomination. Its future permanence and prosperity seemed well assured; but, alas! in but little more than a year after the catastrophe at Abingdon the academy in Baltimore was consumed. Two such disasters, and in such quick succession, crushed, for the time, the educational enterprise of the Church.

With reference to these fiery calamities Dr. Coke said: "Brother Asbury and I were now clearly of opinion that the will of God was evidently manifested, and that the Methodists ought not to enter into such expensive popular undertakings, but bend their whole force to the salvation of souls." When Cokesbury was destroyed Asbury said: "The Lord called not Mr. Whitefield nor the Methodists to build colleges. I wished only for schools; Dr. Coke wanted a college." It is not strange that after so great a bestowment of effort and money, which seemed to attract the flames, the young Church should have felt itself baffled in the attempt to establish and conduct institutions of learning.

It was easy, in the light of the conflagration, to say what might have been; and even to deplore the enthu-

* Coke's Journal in "Arminian Magazine," (London,) 1798, p. 369.

siastic zeal which brought Cokesbury into existence. Dr. Coke, after the school in Baltimore was burned, exclaimed, "O that all this money had been laid out for a married ministry!" But would it have been so laid out? It is, indeed, doubtful whether the money given for the schools in the twelve eventful years immediately following the Church's organization would have been contributed for any other object of benevolence. It is quite certain that the work accomplished for the intellectual growth of the denomination was of far greater value than all the money expended. The memory of those years of heroic toil and sacrifice to promote Christian learning, though they ended in fiery disaster, is a precious possession of the Church. Seed moistened with tears was then sown from which, in subsequent years, rich harvests bent to the sickle. In the service of education the fathers of American Methodism made a brave record which their children now contemplate with complacency and gratitude.

The pecuniary loss resulting from the two conflagrations was very large for so young a Church to suffer. A Methodist house of worship was also consumed by the fire which destroyed the academy in Baltimore. Dr. Coke placed the loss from both fires at ten thousand pounds sterling. Bishop Asbury, whose familiarity with the subject gave him the basis for an accurate judgment, estimated it at "from fifteen to twenty thousand pounds." The disheartening effect of such disasters, no doubt, rendered an immediate attempt to repair the ruin impracticable; but the ashes of the schools were alive with the faith and energy of heroes, from which was destined to spring forth, phœnix-like, a successful movement to establish the agencies of education in the Church.

Cokesbury and its successor at Baltimore were not the only schools which the infant Church established. We have seen how, in the face of peril, the missionaries of the new denomination early entered Kentucky. In

the month of May, 1790, Bishop Asbury presided over the first Conference held in that territory. In the midst of the hardships, privations, and poverty of a frontier country, that Conference resolved to build an institution of learning. Asbury says: "We fixed a plan for a school, and called it Bethel; and obtained a subscription of upward of three hundred pounds in land and money toward its establishment." He afterward says: "Brother Lewis offered me one hundred acres of land for Bethel, on a good spot for building materials."

The history of this educational enterprise is as melancholy as it is interesting. Francis Poythress, an influential leader of the early itinerancy, was appointed, in 1788, to preside over a district in Kentucky. Chiefly by his influence and efforts Bethel Academy was founded. It was erected upon a bluff in Jessamine County, on the Kentucky River. The progress of the work was not rapid, and the school did not open until some years after its inception. Its erection cost a severe struggle. The sparseness of the population and the depredations of the Indians were formidable obstacles to the undertaking. The preachers earnestly solicited funds for the school, and thereby diminished their own scant receipts. The people were liberal, but their resources were small. The Legislature appropriated six thousand acres of ground to the institution, which gift seems to have proved rather a hinderance than a help.

The exact time that Bethel school was opened is not clear. It was in operation, however, as early as April, 1796, for at that time the Rev. Henry Smith was there at Conference, and he says the school was then taught by John Metcalf, a local preacher. Mr. Metcalf had previously been a traveling preacher. In the spring of 1792 Bishop Asbury was at Bethel, and remarked in his Journal, that he had found it necessary "to change the plan of the house to make it more comfortable in cold weather." A

year later he was there again, when trustees were appointed and sundry regulations were made for the school. When nearly two years had passsd Asbury was again there, and says: "We had work enough to write subscription papers, to be sent abroad for the purpose of collecting one hundred pounds to finish Bethel school, and secure the land; but my expectations are small—the people have so little sense of God and religion. Saturday, I opened the new house on 1 Thess. v, 14; and on Sunday we had a sermon and love-feast." This was in March, 1795, almost five years after the Conference resolved upon the enterprise.*

The next mention Asbury makes of the academy is on the 30th of April, 1796, when he says: "We had a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Bethel school, and it was agreed it should be a *free school*, and that only the English tongue and the sciences should be taught. I drew up an address on behalf of the school in order to raise three hundred dollars per annum to support a president teacher."

The building, though not as large as Cokesbury, was of considerable dimensions. Its length was eighty feet, and its width thirty feet. It was "three stories with a high roof, and finished below,"—a "Cokesbury in miniature." Thus Bishop Asbury described it in the autumn of 1800.

Valentine Cook, who, as we have seen, was a student in Cokesbury, was placed in charge of Bethel school at a date not far from 1800. Dr. Redford, in his "History of Methodism in Kentucky," erroneously states that Metcalf succeeded Cook in the presidency of Bethel. It is said that Cook organized the academy, which is also an error, if it be meant that he was its first president. We have, how-

*As Asbury states that he opened the new house with a sermon in March, 1795, and as Smith records that in April, 1796, the school was in progress, it appears probable that the opening of the house in March, 1795, by Asbury, was nearly or quite simultaneous with the inauguration of the school.

ever, in Cook, the coincidence of a student in the first school originated by the Church becoming the chief teacher of the second school which it founded. Thus it appears that Cokesbury gave not only a powerful preacher but also an educator to the Church.

Bethel did not become a prey to the flames, yet it encountered fiery trials—trials too great, indeed, for its endurance. Cokesbury and Bethel were, it seems, unfortunate in their location. Referring to the latter, Bishop Asbury said: "It is too distant from public places; its being surrounded by the river Kentucky in part, we now find to be no benefit. Thus all our excellences are turned into defects. Perhaps Brother Poythress and myself were as much overseen with this place, as Dr. Coke was with the seat of Cokesbury. But all is right that works right, and all is wrong that works wrong, and we must be blamed by men of slender sense for consequences impossible to foresee, for other people's misconduct."

Bethel Academy became involved in complications which hindered its prosperity. Some of its patrons died, and others failed in responding to its needs. Mr. Poythress labored earnestly to establish it, and received censure on account of its pecuniary cost and its ineligible situation. Of upright character and a sensitive nature, he keenly felt the criticisms that were passed upon his administration of the enterprise. Whether insanity would have smitten him had he not been censured is not known. He, however, sank under hopeless mental aberration. "The getting up an institution of the kind was perhaps premature," says the Rev. Henry Smith. He adds: "It certainly was badly located as it turned out, and perhaps not well managed." Smith expresses his entire confidence in Poythress. *

With all his scholarship, mental acumen, and popularity as a preacher, Valentine Cook did not overcome the influ-

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," December 1, 1841.

ences that hindered the progress of the school. He remained but a few years at the head of it, and subsequently presided over a school at Harrodsburg, in Kentucky. After an unequal struggle with adverse fortune Bethel yielded to its fate, and was known only as a thing of the past.

In the Journal of the Rev. John Andrew, father of Bishop Andrew, is this record of a Conference in Georgia, at which Bishop Asbury presided, in 1790: "Saturday, March 13, we sat on the business of the college to be erected in this quarter." Asbury, in his Journal at this time, records: "We have a prospect of obtaining a hundred acres of land for every one hundred pounds we can raise and pay for the support of Wesley and Whitefield School. On Monday we rode out to view three hundred acres of land offered for the above purpose."* The historian of the denomination in Georgia asserts that it was decided that five hundred acres of land should be purchased for the institution, the price of which was one pound per acre, continental money, and that subscriptions to be paid in cattle, rice, indigo, or tobacco, should be secured for the erection of the buildings.† In a letter to Morrell, June 24, 1790, Asbury says: "I have laid the foundation of two schools, one in Georgia, another in Kentucky, sixty-six feet by forty, form and plan of Cokesbury. I have the offer of hundreds of acres of land in each county."

A school was established about 1789 among the Indians. On the 12th of February, 1790, Asbury wrote to Morrell: "We have made a beginning to teach and preach to the Catawaba Indians. The children learn surprisingly, and the old people are very attentive to hear preaching, and implicitly obey, as far as they are taught, as to keeping the Sabbath and prayer. We give a person twenty pounds a year to teach them."

* Asbury's "Journal," March, 1790, vol. ii, p. 76.

† Smith's "History of Methodism in Georgia and Florida."

There was a school also in Virginia which bore the name of Ebenezer. Bishop Asbury labored to establish it at the same time that Cokesbury and Bethel were struggling for existence. In the last month of 1794 Asbury says: "Our burdensome stone, Ebenezer, now gives us some trouble and care. If we can employ good men, keep up discipline, and maintain credit, it may come to something." Three days later he writes: "I had a meeting with the trustees of Ebenezer school. Matters are very discouraging; people in general care too little for the education of their children." In January, 1798, Asbury writes: "Ebenezer Academy is under poor regulations; and, what is more than all, some gentlemen of Brunswick County had the confidence and want of propriety to wish to wrest it wholly out of our hands, after we had collected so much money to build it."

Ebenezer seems to have been more fortunate as to length of life than either Cokesbury or Bethel, yet according to the first historian of the Church, it ceased to be a Methodist school. Mr. Lee says there was a school "on the Yadkin, in North Carolina; one in South Carolina; one in Georgia, and one in Kentucky. But most of them fell through in a few years. However, there is a good school kept at present at Ebenezer,* in Brunswick County, in Virginia; but it is not under the direction of the Methodists. There are but few trustees remaining, some being dead, and others removed; some of the remaining trustees are not of our society. The present teacher has the entire government of the school; holding the house and plantation free of expense, and taking in scholars and governing them as he pleases."

In 1795 Bishop Asbury dedicated an academy in Newberry District, South Carolina. Its name was Mount

* Mr. Lee's "History of the Methodists" was published in 1809, and Ebenezer school is affirmed to have been in operation at that time, though not under Methodist control.

Bethel. "The main building was twenty by forty feet, divided by a partition, with chimneys at each end, constructed of rough, unhewn stone." The upper chambers served as dormitories. "Several comfortable cabins were also built as residences of the teachers and as boarding houses. About a hundred yards distant, at the foot of a hill, ran a bold spring of pure water of sufficient volume to supply all the wants of the resident population."

This school was proposed by Bishop Asbury, and "Edward Finch gave thirty acres of land as a site." On Thursday, March 7, 1793, Asbury writes: "Preached at Finch's. I consulted the minds of our brethren about building a house for Conference, preaching, and a district school; but I have no ground to believe that our well-laid plan will be executed—our preachers are unskillful, and our friends have little money." Two days afterward, however, he preached near Union Court House, where he says: "We were closely employed in writing subscriptions for the district school, and copies of the constitution."

"The school was for six years under the rectorship of the Rev. Mark Moore, a man eminently qualified for the post, assisted by two other teachers, Messrs. Smith and Hammond. At the close of this term of service Mr. Moore resigned, and took charge of a school in Columbia, where by his influence and preaching ability, which was of the first order, he materially aided in the permanent establishment of Methodism. On the retirement of Mr. Moore, Mr. Hammond, father of ex-Governor Hammond, took charge of the school, and taught it with signal ability for many years. Mount Bethel was largely patronized, and had students from Georgia and North Carolina. A number of the leading men in South Carolina were prepared for college at Mount Bethel. The first and second classes which were graduated in the South Carolina College received their preparatory training here."*

* Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina."

Bishop Asbury preached and wrote appeals in behalf of Mount Bethel, and "the academy was built and sustained by annual collections. The salary of the rector (three hundred dollars) was pledged and raised by the South Carolina Conference." The school ceased its existence about the year 1820.

The Rev. George Dougharty, of South Carolina, was an early laborer in behalf of education in the young Church. The Rev. Dr. Lovick Pierce says: "As early as 1803 he was laboring in his native state for the establishment of an academy, to be under the control of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His success, however, was very limited. He did indeed inaugurate his plan in a small academy, founded upon an endowment too meager to give it permanent life, and it did not long survive its originator.* But it left upon the mind of the Church the living idea of the want of sanctified learning, which like a precious leaven has been working in the religious mind ever since." †

Bishop Asbury was an enthusiastic friend of Christian education, and he sought to promote it in all parts of the Church. In 1791 he addressed a letter to the members of the societies, in which he earnestly counseled them to build schools for their children throughout the country. In that letter he says: "We have been at no small expense to provide a house for refined education, to serve those whose wealth and desires lead them to improve the minds of their children.‡ This will not extend to all, neither will it meet the ideas and wishes of those who have personal and located interests. What I now recommend, as your duty and privilege, is to give the key of knowledge in a general way to your children and those of the poor in the vicinity of your small

* Mr. Dougharty died in 1806.

† Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit," page 291.

‡ The reference here is, no doubt, to Cokesbury.

towns and villages. It is submitted to your serious consideration, providence, and charity, whether a plan of Christian education may not be brought into execution. In every large society where the members are able and willing, to build a school for your sons and to appropriate land—to employ a single skillful, pious young man of the society; fix his salary according to that of a traveling preacher; or, if a married man, the same with that of a married preacher. The worship of God in a school-house should be the reading of the word of the Lord, singing, and prayer every morning and evening. Playing strictly prohibited. To enjoin manly exercise; working in the garden or field, walking, reading, or speaking in public, or bathing. To admit the children whose parents are not in our society, by paying, and submission to the rules. To take as many poor of our own and others as you can. To build a separate school for your daughters, and put these under a gracious woman of abilities; to learn to read, write, sew, knit, mark, and make their own clothing. To have their religious exercises and instructions the same as your sons. To expel the false, obstinately wicked, and incorrigible of either sex. The elder can spend a day in the school once in two weeks, to see how both parts of the education are attended to. It might be well to elect and appoint three men, wise, good, and willing, as trustees or stewards, to serve a year, in order to manage the temporalities, visit at set times, admit or expel after consulting the elder; and three very discreet, godly women for the daughters, who shall do the same.

"The school may be erected and finished clear of debt, or rent, for one hundred pounds. Some pious people will probably at their death leave legacies, and annual subscriptions should be opened through the society, and for any others that will assist. A charity sermon once a year and public collections may be necessary. Perhaps sixty or seventy pounds will be sufficient for the annual expense.

The sisters must collect among their sex, and also see how the mistress performs her duty."

The plan which Bishop Asbury thus outlined he tried to put into operation. On the sixth of December, 1792, he wrote in Virginia: "Rode through the rain to Edward Dromgoole's. Here I found a few friends, and formed a constitution for a district school, which, with a little alteration, will form a general rule for any part of the continent." Nearly six months previously he noted in his Journal the founding of a school in Pennsylvania, of which he says: "We have founded a seminary of learning called Union School. Brother C. Munger is manager, who also has charge of the district. This establishment is designed for instruction in grammar, languages, and the sciences."

Prosperity did not very long attend any of the early educational enterprises of American Methodism. Poverty, inexperience, divided counsels, and especially fire, were formidable obstacles; too formidable, indeed, for the infant Church to overcome. Experience, however, was acquired, mistakes became manifest, the devotion of the denomination to education was vindicated, and results of permanent value were obtained. It may be boldly asserted that no Christians in the United States ever labored more zealously to establish institutions of learning than did the leaders of Methodism in the years immediately following the organization of the Church. Those early struggles and sacrifices, though ending in disaster, are an enduring and overwhelming refutation of the charge that the Methodist Episcopal Church has not been friendly to intelligence and culture.

It has been said that such was even Dr. Coke's conception of the illiteracy of the American preachers, that at a Conference in Baltimore he suggested to Asbury that the itinerants be called up to show if they could read. Asbury assented, and proposed that Monday should be the

time. On Sunday he put up some of his master workmen, "and they preached with so much eloquence and power, that the impulsive doctor sprang to his feet and embraced Asbury, exclaiming, 'I can't preach a bit! I can't preach a bit!' Asbury quietly smiled, and asked, 'Shall we have them up to-morrow and see whether or not they can read?' 'No. I don't care whether they can read or not: I can't preach a bit!'" *

Plans better adapted to promote Methodist culture might, perhaps, have been devised than those which were employed; yet at the beginning of this educational epoch there were only fifteen thousand members, most of whom had but recently been gathered to the altars of the Church. The Superintendents and preachers, a band of but little more than a hundred, were burdened with the labors of the mightiest evangelical movement that ever blessed the continent. Is it wonderful, then, that those itinerants in the saddle and their new converts did not administer the educational concerns of the Church with unerring sagacity? If Harvard and Yale had been twice reduced to ashes in the first decade of their existence, would they have recovered from such calamities more quickly than did the literary enterprise of Methodism after it was baffled by the flames?

One of the ablest Methodist preachers of his time, whose travels with Bishop Asbury in the first years of this century gave him the means of observing all the departments of the Church's work throughout the country, published in the year 1822 his views of the first labors of the denomination in the cause of education. He says: "Cokesbury College was almost coeval with our ecclesiastical independence. The whole history of this school of our prophets furnishes a striking proof of the want of comprehensive views and a knowledge of practical details. It was inconsistent with the theory of those times to divide

* The Rev. Dr. Summers, in "The Wesley Memorial Volume," p. 525.

labor, even for the sake of maintaining a college. The traveling connection was disburdened of this care, and the building was soon after burned, but by what means was never known. Several other buildings were erected in different parts for the purpose of education, all of which sank into neglect, while numbers of preachers were locating and seeking a livelihood in different callings. A small part of the money which was laid out in those buildings might have been appropriated to qualify preachers to become teachers, who might have been placed in the most suitable situations, and encouraged to begin in a small way without being degraded in rank below their brethren.* Such a beginning might have been made, if the views of projectors had been directed to such a plan.

"Our early seminaries failed for the want of genial principles. Dr. Coke brought all his ideas with him from Oxford, gave them to Mr. Asbury, and left the continent. Mr. Asbury could not be in colleges and schools and everywhere else at the same time. Though he did much, and tried to do more, he possessed in no degree the attribute of ubiquity. These high-sounding measures soon lost their novelty, and the people became weary of solicitations for more money, of the fruits of which the prospect was daily becoming more distant. Since the conflagration at Cokesbury, it has been common to hear among the preachers of the frowns of Providence upon our institutions of learning; but really it would be much more correct to hear of our own errors in this department. Whenever men aim at impossibilities they must needs experience the frowns of Providence. At this time, though the numbers and the wealth of the Connection have so greatly

* The Rev. Hope Hull, who located in 1795, was awake to the necessity for schools, and he opened one in Georgia for both sexes, and "divided his time between teaching and preaching." By his efforts chiefly, "the first respectable brick building was erected in Washington," Georgia, "designed to be used as an academy."

increased, it would be impossible to carry the former plan into execution. And yet it is possible, and always was, to do much toward the advancement of learning among us. Providence never did and never will frown upon practicable means of instruction." *

About twenty years after the destruction of the school in Baltimore, a Methodist collegiate enterprise was inaugurated in that city, under the presidency of Dr. Samuel K. Jennings. Dr. Jennings was a liberally educated man, and a graduate in the class of 1790 of Rutger's College. He was an illustration of the truth that the early Methodist preachers won intelligent as well as illiterate people to God. Young Jennings, a few years after he left college, had an interview with an itinerant, whose name was Heath, in which he uttered deistical opinions, of which he was fond. The preacher meekly and politely listened to the educated young man, and when he paused for a reply, said: "Young man, I see that you are established upon a rock!" which gratified Jennings; but then the preacher proceeded to add, "*from which nothing but the power of God can ever move you.*" "Ah, what's that?" thought Jennings. "The power of God; is there, indeed, such a thing as the realization of that power? And is this his only answer?" And so, to his utter disappointment, he was himself instantly confounded. In truth the power of God was really on him. He continued to reflect. "The power of God! This is a new element in the process. I must examine this. If it be a genuine experience I must know it." The result was, the skeptical graduate bowed at the mercy-seat and became a devoted Christian, and a very popular preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He did not however join the itinerancy. At a Conference in Virginia, in 1815, Asbury, who seldom describes the sermons he heard, says: "Dr. Jennings preached us a great

* The Rev. Nicholas Snethen in the "Wesleyan Repository," vol. i, 1822, pp. 372–73.

sermon on, 'I am the vine, ye are the branches.'" Dr. Jennings was, no doubt, the first native preacher of American Methodism who had received a full collegiate training.

As early as the year 1800 Asbury looked toward Dr. Jennings as a man whom it was desirable to bring into the service of the young Church as an educator. Holding the Conference at Bethel, Kentucky, in that year, he says: "It was thought expedient to carry the first design of education into execution, and that we should employ a man of sterling qualifications, to be chosen by and under the direction of a select number of trustees and others, who should obligate themselves to see him paid, and take the profits, if any, arising from the establishment. Dr. Jennings was thought of, talked of, and written to."

Jennings, however, did not go to Kentucky, but Valentine Cook took Bethel school. In about seventeen years subsequently, we find Dr. Jennings at the head of Asbury College, in Baltimore.

This institution was opened in 1817. With respect to its origin and design the editors of the "Methodist Magazine," in the year 1818, said: "Many sincere friends of Methodism have long realized the great deficiency in the methods and means of education; and have regretted the want of seminaries under the special direction and superintendence of that religious community to which they are united. A laudable zeal for the establishment of such institutions is now prevailing in different sections of the United States. The Asbury College has probably exceeded in its progress, considering the short time it has been established, any literary institution in this country. The character of the president, the Rev. Samuel K. Jennings, M.D., is too well known to need any commendation from us. His comprehensive mind, illuminated by science, has long been employed in designing a system on which a knowledge of the important branches of litera-

ture might be obtained with the greatest ease and facility. The *plan* and actual operations of the Asbury College will demonstrate that these exertions have not been ineffectual.

"The constitution of this college makes it necessary that the president must forever be a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The trustees are to be elected annually by ballot, who must be thirty years of age, of at least five years' standing in the Methodist Church, and resident in Baltimore. Candidates for the itinerant ministry are to have tuition without charge, and as soon as funds can be provided to defray the expense any number of the sons of itinerant ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church will be admitted to the utmost extent of the means provided. And whenever ways and means can be procured, the candidates for the itinerant ministry will be furnished with board and tuition to any number for which the necessary provision is made by the friends of the institution. It will be the province of the Conference to recommend the candidates for each of these benevolent purposes.

"There are now about *one hundred and seventy* students and scholars in the seminary, whose progress, taken collectively, surpasses any thing commonly exhibited in public schools."

The prospects of Asbury College seemed very flattering, but, like its predecessors, it expired. Another school was established in the city of New York, called the Wesleyan Seminary. It was opened in the beginning of the year 1819. It, too, was the fruit of struggles, and its beginning was prosperous. It had two departments, one for males, and the other for females. The principal of the school was appointed by the New York Conference, and there were four assistant instructors. The general English branches were taught, and also Latin and Greek. At the end of the first six months the school numbered about one hundred and sixty scholars. One of its friends in 1819 wrote:

"I cannot for my own part resist the conviction that it has the smiles and the protection of Heaven. The pleasing prospect which it affords of present and future benefit to this section of our Church is fully calculated to invite redoubled effort."

In the period, 1817–1827, inclusive, there were established under the patronage of the Methodist Episcopal Church the following institutions of learning, namely: New Market; New Hampshire, which developed into Wilbraham; New York City; Cazenovia, New York; White Plains, New York; Bucksport, Maine; Washington, Mississippi; and Athens, Georgia. Two colleges were also founded and put in operation in the same period, namely: Augusta College, in Kentucky; and Madison College, in Pennsylvania. At the latter institution Bishop Simpson was educated.

Augusta College was the product of the joint efforts of the Ohio and Kentucky Conferences. George S. Houston, of Dayton, Ohio, a layman of intelligence and piety, submitted to the Rev. James B. Finley, who was then a presiding elder, the question of erecting an institution of learning for the Church in the West. "The subject was canvassed in Mr. Finley's district, and then brought before the Ohio Conference." *

The Ohio Conference, not deeming itself competent to attempt the enterprise alone, sent a Committee to the Kentucky Conference to propose a union with it in establishing a college. The Kentucky Conference gave favorable consideration to the proposed project. This was in the year 1821. Commissioners were appointed by each Conference, and the college was soon put in operation at Augusta, Kentucky. In 1822, the Rev. John P. Finley was appointed president of the institution.

Augusta enjoyed religious prosperity. The Rev. John P. Durbin wrote, in January, 1828: "This has been one of

* Redford's "History of Methodism in Kentucky."

the best days I have ever seen. We have a most glorious revival. What will be the fruits no man can yet tell. Twenty-two joined this morning, many of them young men, and students of Augusta College. I think the revival should be considered among the students principally. It commenced with them. It would do you good to witness the soundness of their conversion, and the ardor of their triumph. Our college is prosperous. We have about one hundred students. I had long believed that a college could be made not only the nursery of learning, but also of morals and religion. I am convinced of it more and more every day. I rejoice that we have in the West one regular college where our youth may be educated, and neither their morals nor their principles corrupted. And yet we do not teach them religion otherwise than we teach other men, namely, by preaching to them, and endeavoring to walk uprightly before them. I am clearly convinced that our youth should not be taught by any man who is not decidedly pious."

In a postscript to this communication, which was published in the "Christian Advocate and Journal," February 22, 1828, Professor Durbin said: "I closed my letter last night at nine o'clock. I then returned to the church, and my eyes never beheld such a scene. The house was full of mourners. It is not yet known how many were converted. There are but few students of Augusta College but that are either converted or serious."

From this literary enterprise the Church and the country reaped large results. "Its faculty was always composed of men of piety, genius, and learning; and in all the learned professions in almost every Western and Southern State its alumni may yet be found. It gave to the medical profession, to the bar, and to the pulpit many of their brightest lights." *

After considerably more than a decade of struggle,

* Redford's "History of Methodism in Kentucky."

Augusta, like its predecessors, failed. In 1853 one of its founders, the Rev. James B. Finley, said of it: "Augusta College, like Cokesbury, seems to have been born under some malignant star. Patronized by the two largest Conferences in the West, having a faculty from time to time composed of the brightest stars that shone in the galaxy of Western literature, such as Durbin, Tomlinson, Bascom, Fielding, and others, and having for her alumni a host of talented men in every profession, scattered all over the country; still, like an ill-guided but richly freighted vessel in a stormy sea, she foundered and went down, and the waters closed over her unhappy fate forever." *

Madison College was established at Uniontown, Pennsylvania, under the auspices of the Pittsburg Conference. Its charter was granted by the Legislature in the winter of 1826–27. Its first president was the Rev. Dr. Henry B. Bascom, and one of its first professors was the Rev. Dr. Charles Elliott. The institution was opened in September, 1827. It labored under pecuniary and other embarrassments, which hindered its success, and after a few years the interest of the Church in it was transferred to Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, which was opened under the patronage of the Pittsburg Conference in November, 1833, and which yet lives in increasing vigor and usefulness.

* "Autobiography of the Rev. James B. Finley."

CHAPTER X.

THE PENTECOST OF METHODISM.

NOT immediately, but the tenth day after the ascension of Jesus, did Jerusalem flame with the fiery tongues of Pentecost. Not immediately, but two and a half years after American Methodism became a separate Church, did its day of Pentecost fully come. The religious power that was visible in the new Church from the time of its advance from Lovely Lane Meeting-house, in Baltimore, culminated in the great revival of 1787. Never since Methodism appeared in America, and probably not since its birth in England, had such amazing displays of spiritual power been seen. Indeed Mr. Wesley said that he had read of no such revival since the pentecostal days. Virginia was the chief arena of the wonderful scenes of this sublime drama. Three circuits in the southern portion of the State shared most largely in the powerful awakening. From the Roanoke to the James, and from the mountains to the sea, the revival swept like flames through a dry forest.

It was greatest in midsummer. Amid the sultry noontide * the fire fell from heaven. Its effect was immediate and overwhelming. Persecutors of the Methodists fell prostrate under the power of God. The screams and cries of convicted multitudes were as the sound of many waters; and the shouts of the redeemed "like the noise of the seas." On the 27th of August John Dickins wrote from New York: "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in Virginia. It looks like the dawn of the mil-

* It is stated that the hour of Methodist preaching in the country at that period was noon.

lennium." From amidst the wonderful scenes Philip Cox wrote: "Great news from Zion! Never was there so great a work of God in America, (nor yet in England from what we have been able to learn,) as is now in the Brunswick and Sussex Circuits." Dickins says: "It is computed that about Brunswick itself not less than 7,000 souls are under deep conviction. The work is also very extraordinary in some parts of North Carolina. In some parts of Virginia the congregations on Sabbath days consist of several thousands, and many of the greatest persecutors are struck down as dead. Surely this is the Arm of Omnipotence. Ride on, Lord Jesus, ride on!"

James O'Kelly was presiding elder of the district that was most shaken by this mighty Pentecost. He exclaims: "Old Brunswick and Sussex Circuits exceed any thing I ever saw or heard of in America. I believe six thousand were assembled together at the quarterly meeting held a few days ago for the Brunswick Circuit. Hundreds were crying for mercy as on the brink of hell." Says Cox of that scene: "They lay in rows on the ground crying for mercy in the deepest distress. Many of them were the principal gentry of the county. Divers of those who had opposed Dr. Coke when he delivered his testimony against negro slavery were now converted to God." Describing the great quarterly meeting more particularly, Cox says: "Brother O'Kelly preached, Brothers Dromgoole, Brown, Easter, and myself exhorted. Hundreds were in loud cries for mercy. The second day was much greater. It is thought above a hundred whites, besides as many negroes, found peace with God on that day."

Quickly afterward a quarterly meeting was held at Jones's Chapel, on Sussex Circuit. Cox went to it, but the Holy Spirit was there before him. "Before the preachers got there," he says, "the work broke out, so that when we came to the chapel above sixty were down on the floor groaning in loud cries to God for mercy. Brother O'Kelly

tried to preach, but could not be heard for the cries of the distressed. It is thought our audience consisted of no less than 5,000 the first day; and the second day of twice that number. We preached to them in the open air, in the chapel, and in the barn at the same time. Such a sight my eyes never saw before, nor read of, either in Mr. Wesley's Journals, or any other writings, except the account in Scripture of the day of Pentecost. Never, I believe, was the like seen since the apostolic age. Hundreds were at once down on the ground in bitter cries to God for mercy. Many of the first quality in the country were wallowing in the dust, with their silks and broadcloths, powdered heads, rings and ruffles; and some of them were so convulsed that they could neither speak nor stir. Many stood by persecuting, till the power of the Lord laid hold of them, and then they fell themselves, and cried as loud as those they just before persecuted. As we had rather be under than over the just number, we believe that near two hundred whites and more than half as many blacks professed to find Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write."

Hope Hull graphically describes some thrilling scenes of the revival on his (Amelia) circuit: "Some of the vilest opposers," he writes, "now come to the preaching, and, with Paul, they are struck to the earth and cry for mercy. The people of God get round them, and pray with them for five or six hours together." Very touching were some of the scenes. The tender ties of kinship were refined and hallowed by the melting fires of that pentecostal baptism. Love for their kindred hurried the redeemed ones off in pursuit of them. "At last," says Hull, "one will begin to praise God, and say, 'My soul is happy! my soul is happy! The Lord has pardoned my sins!' Then they will run away to their relations—husbands to their wives, and wives to their husbands, parents to their children, and children to their parents—and begin to talk to them and pray for them. Presently they are deeply affected. Then the

people of God gather around them again and begin to pray."

The pleading converts were effective instruments. Their anointed tongues were eloquent. Their yearning solicitude for those they loved was irresistible. With a pathos that melted and won many hearts, they spoke of Jesus and his salvation. Mr. O'Kelly says that "more were awakened by the warm and earnest addresses of the young converts than by the preaching of the word." Mr. Cox, at an infant's funeral, saw thirty converted, and the next day he went to an appointment, and says: "Some of the young children, born at the funeral yesterday, and a few in distress that did not obtain deliverance then, had got here before me and kindled such a flame that I could not be heard in the house. So I sat in a chair on a table* in the wood and exhorted from these words, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' Above sixty were set at liberty this day in this place; blessed be God!"

There were in this revival beautiful and affecting family altar scenes, the remembrance of which must be sweet in heaven. "At many houses," says Mr. Cox, "at some of them, three, at some of them, four, found a saving change while at family prayer." Indeed, the work was not confined to any place. "It was common," says Jesse Lee, "to hear of souls being brought to God while at work in their houses, or in their fields. It was often the case that the people in their corn-fields, white people and black, and sometimes both together, would begin to sing, and being affected would begin to pray, and others would join with them, and they would continue their cries till some of them would find peace to their souls."

All the means of grace were efficient—the preaching, the sacramental altar, the class-meeting, and the prayer-meeting. "At prayer-meetings," says Lee, "the work

* Mr. Cox at the time was afflicted in one of his limbs.

prospered, and many souls were born again, and the meetings often continued all night without intermission. In class-meetings the Lord frequently set the mourning souls at liberty." The example of the Church of the Pentecost in Jerusalem was repeated, in that the number of the saved increased day by day. Says Mr. O'Kelly, "In each circuit souls are daily coming into the fold of Christ."

Among the multitude added to the Methodist Episcopal Church, as the fruit of this wonderful work of God, were John M'Kendree, his wife, and a number of their children. One of the sons, William M'Kendree, became one of the Church's distinguished leaders and Bishops. He records the fact of the great revival "in Brunswick Circuit, under Mr. John Easter, in 1787." He was powerfully moved by the artless recital by an eye-witness of one of the revival scenes. He went to visit a friend who was going with his wife to meeting. "Upon my going to the house of my friend," he says, "he declined going to church, sent a servant with his wife, and we spent the time in reading a comedy and drinking wine. Mrs. —— stayed late at church, but at last, when we were impatient for dinner, she returned and brought strange things to our ears. With astonishment flushing in her countenance she began to tell whom she left 'in a flood of tears,' who were 'down on the floor,' who were 'converted,' what an 'uproar' was going on among the people, cries for mercy and shouts for joy. My heart was touched at her representation. I resolved to seek religion, and began in good earnest to pray for it that evening."

M'Kendree soon went to meeting "fasting and praying." He says: "Mr. Easter preached from John iii, 19–22—'*And this* is the condemnation, that light is come into the world,' etc. From this time I had no peace of mind; I was completely miserable. My heart was broken up, and I saw that it was evil above all things and 'desperately wicked.' A view of God's forbearance, and of the debas-

ing sin of ingratitude, of which I had been guilty in grieving the Spirit of God, overwhelmed me with confusion. Now my conscience roared like a lion. 'The pains of hell gat hold upon me.'"

For three days the repentant M'Kendree was in distress. He exclaims: "I might have said, 'My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.' But in the evening of the third day deliverance came. While Mr. Easter was preaching I was praying as well as I could, for I was almost ready to despair of mercy. Suddenly my doubts and fears fled, hope sprung up in my soul, and *the burden was removed.*"

This revival was led by valiant men—we had almost said apostles—John Easter, James O'Kelly, Philip Cox, and Hope Hull. They were wise in winning souls, mighty through God. It may almost be said they shook the continent, for the wonderful tidings spread afar. Jesse Lee informs us that accounts of this work were spread by newspapers "all through the United States." The good news also flew over England, for some of the most important and vivid statements of this chapter are from letters of O'Kelly, Cox, Dickins, and Hull, in Wesley's "Arminian Magazine" of September, 1788.

These great revival preachers were on God's mission, and they felt it. They felt, too, that God was with them, and so they were fearless of earth and hell! To them all the verities of God were real. Not fine abstractions, not entertaining theories about hell or heaven did they preach, but they proclaimed "the cross with all its shame," retribution and its terrors, and heaven with its enchanting glories, with much assurance and with great boldness. They looked at the things which are not seen. They "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." From the midst of the

revival O'Kelly cried, "For some time past I have felt such an awful sense of the presence of God, as if Christ were coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead."

Probably the mightiest of this band of invincible and victorious heroes was John Easter, M'Kendree's father in God. He "excited great attention. Hundreds, and sometimes thousands, attended his appointments. Frequently while he was preaching the foundations of the place would seem to be shaken, and the people to be moved like the trees of the forest by a mighty tempest. Many were the 'slain of the Lord,' and many were made spiritually alive. If my memory serves me, *four hundred* were counted at a four-days' meeting." Thus wrote M'Kendree of this giant of Methodism.

Easter walked with God, and exercised a powerful, conquering faith. God greatly honored his simple but sublime confidence. M'Kendree describes a scene of which he declares he was an eye-witness, which illustrates Easter's power with God: "While preaching to a large concourse of people in the open air, at a time of considerable drought, it began to thunder, and drops of rain fell. He stopped preaching, and besought the Lord to withhold the rain until evening—to pour out his Spirit, convert the people, and then water the earth. He then resumed his subject. The appearance of rain increased—the people began to get uneasy—some moved to take off their saddles, when, in his peculiar manner, he told the Lord that there were 'sinners there that must be converted or be damned,' and prayed that he would 'stop the bottles of heaven until the evening.' He closed his prayer, and assured us, in the most confident manner, that we might keep our seats—that it would not rain to wet us; that 'souls are to be converted here to-day—my God assures me of it, and you may believe it.' The congregation became composed, and we did not get wet; for the clouds parted, and although there was

a fine rain on both sides of us, there was none where we were until night. The Lord's Spirit was poured out in an uncommon degree, many were convicted, and a considerable number professed to be converted that day."

A man who covenanted to abuse the preacher entered the place of worship on one occasion with a club. Mr. Easter reproved him for some cause, and he shook the club at him. He received a sharper rebuke, whereupon, says M'Kendree, he "approached Mr. Easter brandishing his weapon, with vengeance flashing in his countenance. The preacher calmly said, 'I regard the spilling of my blood for the sake of Christ no more than the bite of a fly,' but warned the furious man of the most awful consequences on his own part. The man was near enough to strike him, but Mr. Easter dared him to strike, telling him what God would do if he laid the weight of his hand upon him. The man's countenance changed—he presently turned round and walked off. 'I told you the devil is a coward,' said Mr. Easter, as the crest-fallen man withdrew."

Wonderful things, indeed, are related of this hero. The Rev. Dr. Leroy M. Lee, in his work on the "Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee," speaks of the facts which were connected with Easter's ministry as "almost miraculous," and of his success as "astonishing." A marvelous scene is described by the Rev. Dr. Bennett, in his "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia," which he says is fully authenticated. Easter was preaching in a forest to a large congregation, when a sudden sound was heard as of a rushing wind. All eyes were turned upward, but no leaf quivered; still the noise continued. Many horses broke loose and rushed wildly through the woods. Men and women by hundreds fell upon the ground. Great cries arose from the startled and convicted multitude. Conversions quickly followed, and the work resulted, ultimately, in hundreds of additions to the Church.

James O'Kelly, who presided over the district where this revival was most extraordinary, was one of the mighty leaders of Methodism in that day. He had a burning zeal for souls. He was a workman not to be ashamed. Asbury speaks of meeting him in 1780, and says, he "appeared to be a warm-hearted, good man." Afterward he says: "James O'Kelly and myself enjoyed and comforted each other. This dear man rose at midnight and prayed very devoutly for me and himself. He cries, 'Give me children, or I die.'" He was M'Kendree's first presiding elder, and he who was converted while hearing the wonderful John Easter writes: "Brother O'Kelly preached, surely the greatest sermon I ever heard." Dr. Coke said of O'Kelly, "He has been tried and proved; is much owned of God, and of the most undaunted courage."

One of his contemporaries describes O'Kelly as "laborious in the ministry, a man of zeal and usefulness, an advocate for holiness, given to prayer and fasting, an able defender of the Methodist doctrine and faith, and hard against negro slavery in private, and from the press and pulpit."*

Philip Cox was a devoted laborer in that pentecostal visitation. Dr. Coke described him as a young preacher, "a deeply pious and zealous man, and owned of God in the salvation of souls, as much, perhaps, as any one now living."

Hope Hull, who also was prominent in this great work, was one of the remarkable men of his time. In 1788 Coke said of him: "He is young, but is indeed a flame of fire. He appears always on the stretch for the salvation of souls. Our only fear concerning him is, that the sword is too keen for the scabbard—that he lays himself out in the work far beyond his strength." Dr. Lovick Pierce describes Hull as an "awakening and inviting" preacher, who understood how to expose the working of the deceitful heart. Sinners often charged him with having

* Bennett's "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia," p. 315.

learned their secrets and of using the pulpit to gratify himself in their exposure. "In many of his masterly efforts his words rushed upon his audience like an avalanche, and multitudes seemed to be carried before him like the yielding captives of a stormed castle."

The widely-known Lorenzo Dow, who had previously been under religious concern, was deeply awakened under a sermon by Hull, in New England. Dow says: "He preached from these words: 'Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?'

"As he drew the analogy between a person sick of the consumption and a sin-sick soul, he endeavored to also show how the real balm of Gilead would heal the consumption; and to spiritualize it in the blood of Christ healing the soul, in which he described the way to heaven, and pointed out the way-marks, which I had never heard so clearly described before. By which means I was convinced that this man enjoyed something I was destitute of.

"He then got upon the application, and pointing his finger toward me, made this expression: 'Sinner, there is a frowning Providence above your head, and a burning hell beneath your feet, and nothing but the brittle thread of life prevents you from falling into perdition. But, says the sinner, What must I do? You must pray. But I can't pray. If you don't pray you will be damned;' and as he brought out the last expression he either stamped with his one foot on the box on which he stood, or smote with his hand upon the Bible, which both together came home like a dagger to my heart. I had liked to have fallen backward from my seat, but saved myself by catching hold of my cousin, who sat by my side, and I durst not stir for some time for fear that I should tumble into hell. My sins and the damnable nature of them were in a moment exhibited to my view." *

* Dow's Journal.

One of Hull's distinguished contemporaries, the Rev. Nicholas Snethen, says of him: "His greatest gift was exhortation. If another preacher was present, he always chose to follow and conclude the exercises. He possessed what may be called a contagious voice. Its intonations were so deep and peculiar that, when combined with the operations of his religious feeling, it was almost impossible to resist its effects. I have seen persons fall under his preaching as though they had received a mortal wound, and vast congregations agitated like the trees of a wood in a tempest." Mr. Snethen further says of him, that "he traveled extensively, married, located, and settled in Georgia. Mr. Hull sustained a spotless reputation, and perhaps no preacher in Georgia was more universally respected and beloved."

Such were the men whose ministry was honored of God in inaugurating and guiding one of the most marvelous religious awakenings that has occurred in the whole period of Christian history. In Cox's circuit, he reported that between twelve and fifteen hundred whites, besides a great number of blacks, were converted, and Easter reported about two thousand white converts in his circuit. In Hull's circuit the converts numbered about eight hundred. The work spread into North and South Carolina, Georgia, and elsewhere, as well as into other parts of Virginia. Such was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Methodist societies that the accessions for the year approached the number that there were of members in the Church when it came forth from the Christmas Conference. In the three circuits in Virginia—Brunswick, Sussex, and Amelia—in which the work was greatest, the increase was 2,029 whites, and 817 colored. In the whole Connection the increase was 11,512.* Not only were sinners converted in multitudes, but believers were, of course, refreshed. O'Kelly says, "Old Methodists are taking a

* "Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee," p. 205.

new growth, and going on in the power and spirit of the Gospel."

The great work proved genuine. Cox writes: "I bless God the new-born we have in society seem to stand steadfast. I think I have not yet lost above ten or twelve whites of all that I have joined." Methodism feels now the effect of that wonderful pentecostal triumph, and as its result many harps in heaven are yielding melody to the touch of glorified hands that else were silent. Nearly half a century after the glorious days of that historic revival one of its converts, Bishop M'Kendree, fell at the head of the still advancing hosts, exclaiming, "All is well!"

CHAPTER XI.

POWERFUL REVIVALS IN 1789 AND 1790.

THE marvelous outpouring of the Holy Spirit we have just contemplated transformed Methodism in Virginia, and gave a powerful impulse to the Methodist movement. The new Church was lifted on the swelling tide of the revival to a position it never occupied before. Intolerant prejudices were melted in the flames of that modern Pentecost, and many of the stoutest adversaries suddenly became ardent champions of the cause. The resulting moral reformation was remarkable. One result was the release of slaves. Philip Bruce says that "in Sussex, the Methodists manumitted above a hundred at one court." Jesse Lee visited the favored region some months after the revival had passed its zenith, and found such a change visible as he had never seen among any people. The power was yet present in the assemblies.

While preaching at Petersburg on "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Lee saw some striking spectacles. "One woman dropped from her seat like a person struck dead; but in a little while she was enabled to rise and praise a sin-pardoning God aloud, and many shouted for joy." "I observed," says Lee, "a woman finely dressed, just at my right hand, who trembled as though she had an ague. At length she stood up, and I expected to have seen her drop in the place where she stood. In a little time a young woman came and took hold of her, and they both fell down on their knees together. The young woman began to cry aloud for the mourner; in a little time another young woman came and cried with all her might. By this time

there were several crying aloud, and the house rang with the cries of the people. I began to weep myself, and was forced to stop preaching. Cries and groans were heard in every part of the house. I could not help praising God aloud among the people. Two professed that God had pardoned their sins, and many careless sinners were cut to the heart."

About the beginning of 1789 the work extended to Annapolis, Maryland. The Rev. John Haggerty says: "Brother Chalmers brought the holy fire from Virginia with him." It spread abroad, and "such a revival flame broke out as was never known before in this State."

In early Methodism the watch-night was a special and a solemn service. It was not held on the last night of the year only, but at any time. "The first watch-night was held in London. The service at these times begins at half past eight o'clock, and continues till midnight. The custom was begun at Kingswood by the colliers, who before their conversion used to spend every Saturday night at the ale-house. After they were taught better they spent that night in prayer. Mr. Wesley, hearing of it, ordered it first to be once a month, at the full of the moon, then once a quarter, and recommended it to all his societies." *

Wesley's account of the watch-meeting is: "I was informed that several persons in Kingswood frequently met together at the school, and, when they could spare the time, spent the greater part of the night in prayer and praise and thanksgiving. Some advised me to put an end to this; but upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believed it might be made of more general use, so I sent them word 'I designed to watch with them on the Friday nearest the full of the moon, that we might have light thither and back again.' I gave public notice of this the Sunday be-

* Myles's "Chronological History."

fore, and withal that I intended to preach, desiring they, and they only, would meet me there who could do it without prejudice to their business or families. On Friday abundance of people came. I began preaching between eight and nine, and we continued a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God."

This useful institution was adopted and frequently used by the new Church, with such satisfactory results that its observance is still maintained, though only on the last night of the calendar year.

William Colbert describes a watch-night on Harford Circuit, Maryland. Sunday, November 30, 1791, he says: "At night we had a watch-night at friend Grover's. John Baxley preached on Malachi iii, 18. Archibald M'Creery and I gave exhortation after him. Ford Barns prayed. We had a shout. One woman professed to get converted, and a backslider got mightily shaken." Colbert briefly describes a watch-night in Pennsylvania, which occurred on the 31st of May, 1798. "We held," he says, "a watch-night at Thomas Rutter's. Stokes preached from Mark xiii, 37. Higbee gave an exhortation after him. Our friends got so high that I could scarcely be heard. When meeting was over I spoke to a young woman who had been turned out of society. She appeared to be affected; got engaged in prayer, and professed to get relief to her mind—to be happy." At the Conference of October, 1796, in Philadelphia, a watch-meeting was held. Mr. Colbert says: "Friday, 14, was a day of fasting and prayer before the ordination of the deacons and elders. At night we had a watch-night in Bethel. Anning Owen preached on Romans viii, 9. I gave an exhortation. A friend, by name of Swing, spoke after me. William Early spoke after him, and Seely Bunn concluded the meeting, which I trust was profitable."

John Haggerty held a watch-night at Annapolis, on the 29th of January, 1789, at the commencement of the

awakening there. He says: "We had a watch-night on Thursday evening, and some got alarmed." From that time the revival powerfully progressed. The next night "the work of conversion," he says, "began in a way I little expected. I met the class of young men and received three into class. When class-meeting was over I heard a poor soul groaning and praying. We went down stairs and found in the passage a black woman in great distress. We began exhorting her, and then proceeded to singing and prayer. The noise called in others; another black woman was soon on her knees beside the former, and God was pleased to set both their souls at liberty; then an old man, then a member whom I had joined that night, and then the man of the house in which we were, so that about nine o'clock we had many converted." We have heretofore seen Haggerty instrumental in the conversion of a merchant, Thomas Morrell, who became a leader in the ministry of the young Church; we now behold him, with equal joy, leading poor black women to Jesus.

Ignatius Pigman came to Haggerty's help and preached "a sweet, smooth, edifying sermon." When he closed Haggerty rose and began to sing. Then he exhorted. "The power of God," he says, "came in a wonderful manner into my soul, and I think we had one of the loudest shouts I ever remember to have heard. I requested as many as had a desire to come forth in the great congregation and join the society. Twenty-four, one after another, gave me their names, most of whom had found peace."

The class-meeting was a powerful auxiliary of revivals in early Methodism. When converts multiplied the class-room became a center of thrilling interest. Mourners were led to the class-meeting to find the way of peace, and converts went there to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly. So Haggerty, in the revival which he was leading in Annapolis, says: "Our class-meetings are exceedingly lively."

Jonathan Forrest now appears upon the scene. He was then in middle life and, with Valentine Cook, was traveling Calvert Circuit, Maryland. Forrest "met the young men," says Haggerty, "and five of them struggled into life." The Sunday, Haggerty says, "was a day to be remembered by many, and especially by myself. Such transporting joy filled my soul that I only wanted wings to fly and rest forever with my Lord and Saviour." In the morning, he says, "many were cut to the heart; in the afternoon we had another shout; five or six were set at liberty, and many spoke feelingly at the love-feast in the evening."

In the midst of his ecstasies and triumphs persecution threatened this man of God. Haggerty writes: "They have banished me out of town by report, and have cut off my ears. My heart pities and prays for them."

Dr. Coke was at Annapolis in 1789, and says: "After my last prayer on Sunday, the third of May, the congregation began to pray and praise aloud in a most astonishing manner. At first I felt some reluctance to enter into the business; but soon the tears began to flow, and I think I have seldom found a more comforting or strengthening time. This praying and praising aloud is a common thing throughout Virginia and Maryland. What shall we say? Souls are awakened and converted by multitudes; and the work is surely a genuine work, if there be a genuine work of God upon earth. Whether there be wildfire in it or not, I do most earnestly wish that there was such a work at this present time in England. In one meeting in this State we have reason to believe that twenty souls received full sanctification; and it is common to have from twenty to fifty souls justified in a day in one place."

The work was very extensive during this year—1788–9—on Calvert Circuit under Forrest and Cook. Haggerty says: "On Tuesday I went to supply Brother Forrest's place at the head of South River. As soon as I began to

speak the Lord applied his word, and sinners began to tremble. All the members in society got a fresh spring for heaven, and such a time they have not had for years." The revival on Forrest's Circuit was indeed wonderful. Nicholas Snethen refers to it as "the great revival." The numbers converted remind one of the great ingathering on Amelia Circuit, in Virginia, under Hope Hull, during the pentecostal season of 1787. The increase of members on the circuit of which Forrest had charge was for the year above five hundred, more than three fourths of whom were white persons.

There was also a glorious work in Baltimore in 1789. Asbury was there in May, and says that "multitudes came to hear, and great cries were heard among the people, who continued together until three o'clock in the morning. Many souls professed to be convicted, converted, and sanctified."

This was the occasion of the Conference at Baltimore, though Asbury does not mention that fact. Coke does, however. He says: "Our first Conference for the State of Maryland began in Baltimore on Tuesday, the fourth [of May, 1789,] in which we were all unanimous and truly affectionate. On Wednesday evening, after I had preached, and Mr. Asbury exhorted, the congregation began to pray and praise aloud, and continued so to do till two o'clock in the morning. Out of a congregation of two thousand people, I suppose two or three hundred were engaged at the same time in praising God, praying for the conviction and conversion of sinners, or exhorting those around them with the utmost vehemence; and hundreds more were engaged in wrestling prayer either for their own conversion or sanctification. The great noise of the people soon brought a multitude to see what was going on, for there was no room in the church, which has been lately built, and will hold a larger congregation than any other of our churches in the States. One of our elders was the

means that night of the conversion of seven poor penitents within his little circle in less than fifteen minutes. Such was the zeal of many that a tolerable company attended the preaching at five the next morning, notwithstanding the late hour at which they parted. Next evening Mr. Asbury preached, and again the congregation began as before, and continued as loud and as long as the former evening. This praying and praising aloud has been common in Baltimore for a considerable time, notwithstanding our congregation in this town was for many years before one of the calmest and most critical upon the continent. Many also of our elders who were the most connected and sedate of our preachers have entered with all their hearts into this work. And it must be allowed that gracious and wonderful has been the change, our greatest enemies themselves being the judges, that has been wrought on multitudes on whom this work began at those wonderful seasons." *

Concerning the revival in Baltimore, the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper wrote, August 17, and September 10, 1798: "The work began many months ago, which to the present is as lively as ever. God is pouring out his Spirit very wonderfully indeed, to the admiration of beholding and listening thousands. We have conversions every week, and at times every day for days together. We have had from one to twenty and thirty converted in a meeting, and once, I believe, as many as fifty. We have likewise received ten, twenty, thirty, and forty members a day. Many hard, stout-hearted men and women have been brought in bitter agonies to cry to God for mercy, till the Lord has filled them with love and peace. Some who had been obstinate opposers have felt the mighty power to their salvation.

"The people of God rejoice in this work and give glory to the Lord, while the careless and ungodly stand amazed, as if thunderstruck, and a general panic arrests many as-

* Coke's "Journal," pp. 109, 110.

tonished spectators. Some are violently offended, and are wicked enough, as in our Lord's day, to call it the work of the devil—madness, disorder, and delusion; others seem to pity us, and pretend they fear we shall ruin our reputation. Others are very extravagant in drawing groundless conclusions, holding up the most enormous consequences which will ensue if these people go on. But all this don't deter us from pursuing the best of causes—to wit, that of sinners' conversion to God."

The quarterly meeting in those early times was a great agency for promoting revivals. Indeed, almost all the peculiar arrangements of Methodism aided to bring sinners to God. But the quarterly meeting, especially when the presiding elder was a quickening and awakening preacher, was a time of transcendent interest. The love-feast, the sermons by the presiding elder and others, the exhortations, and the other services, together with the throngs in attendance, gave a striking impressiveness to such occasions.

On the seventh and eighth of August, in the year 1789, a quarterly meeting was held in Baltimore. Asbury was there, and says, "it was a wonder-working time." Ezekiel Cooper was also there, and he wrote that "the following week Satan's kingdom suffered great loss."

Mr. Cooper says that "the first day of the quarterly meeting we had a melting time. Many cried bitterly for mercy. Sunday, the second day of the quarterly meeting was, I think, as awful and glorious a day as ever I saw. In the love-feast, at eight o'clock, we truly had a little Pentecost, and dwelt, as it were, in the suburbs of heaven. Glory appeared to rest on every countenance, while one after another feelingly declared what God had done for their souls. I hardly ever felt so happy before. My soul was ready to fly to the celestial world. O what a shower of grace came upon us. The place was truly awful because of God's presence. Souls were justified and sanctified by the power and virtue of blood divine.

"In public preaching the word was so accompanied by the Holy Ghost, that there were few but felt its mighty power. Some of the most unlikely to turn to God were brought to tremble and weep. At night we had a great outcry, and the deep of many hearts thoroughly broken up. We broke up on Sunday night very late, many being converted." Asbury says that at this quarterly meeting "fifty or sixty souls appeared to be brought to God." Cooper adds: "Some were two, three, and four hours on their knees, and on the floor, in bitter cries and agonies for mercy, till they could rejoice in God their Saviour. What power! What awe rested upon the people.

"Some, after they went home, could not sleep, but wept and prayed all night. But the greatest time was still to come. The next day was such a time as I know not how to describe, so as to give you a just idea of it. The Lord took the cause into his own hand, and showed us that he could and would work for his glory and the salvation of souls.

"I was sent for early in the morning to visit a respectable young lady who had not closed her eyes the whole night. When I went she was weeping and praying in the arms of a young woman who had lately found peace. My heart was much affected at seeing her penitential sorrow. Her cry was: 'Lord, save, or I perish!' I exhorted her to believe, and then sung and prayed with her. She continued thus for several hours, when a number of friends, full of faith, were collected to supplicate Heaven in her behalf. The Lord broke into her soul, and she lifted her voice with others in loud praises to God.

"This is only a small part of this day's work. About ten o'clock in the morning a number of mourners got together in a private house, where the work of conversion began; first one, then another, found the Lord. At length some struggled into holiness, so that there were many conversions and some sanctified. The news spread. The people collected till the house and street were filled with

numerous believers and a wondering multitude. Some came through mere curiosity to see what was going forward, and got convicted and converted before they left the house. One young man came up and began to make diversion of it, 'Surely,' said he, 'the people are out of their senses.' He drew nigh the window. At length the power laid hold on him. In he came, and fell among the others, and cried to God till the Lord blessed him; and he still rejoices in God his Saviour. This continued till dark. We then repaired to the church and presently had it full, though no previous appointment had been made for meeting that night. We did not break up until two o'clock the next morning, which made sixteen hours without intermission, excepting while we went from the private house to the preaching house. Some would be two, three, and four hours in constant struggles under the burden of guilt, presently would get delivered, arise, and praise and give glory to God; enough to pierce any hearts but hearts of stone. Many hard-hearted opposers are conquered at last, and are now engaged in seeking their salvation. Tuesday was like unto Monday, though there were not so many conversions. The meeting began at eight in the morning and continued till ten at night. Wednesday and Thursday the work went on. I cannot, with any certainty, tell how many were brought in that week, though they were many, and they still continue coming.

"Religion is the general topic now in town among all kinds of people; some aspersing, some wondering, others inquiring, rejoicing, etc. The people appear panic struck; and our reverend neighbors are warning their flocks to take care of these wild people, the Methodists; but the people have sense enough I trust to judge for themselves." *

* Letter of the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, dated September 10, 1789, and published in Wesley's "Arminian Magazine," August, 1790. Also a letter of Mr. Cooper, dated August 17, 1789, and published in 1851 in the "Christian Advocate and Journal."

An old Methodist wrote in 1836 that the revival in Baltimore in 1789 was "attended by considerable noise, which alarmed the old members of the Church. Many consultations were held in presence of the writer; and the general conclusion was that such disorders had never been witnessed among Methodists, and that several of the most noisy had no claim to singular piety. It was granted that the feelings of an awakened sinner and those of a young convert might possibly be beyond their control; yet even these up to that time had never disturbed the congregation. The universal conclusion, however, was that they should not publicly oppose the shouting, lest while they plucked up the tares they might destroy the wheat also; but that they would privately discourage it. This apparent disorder was to them a new thing, and might, in their estimation, do much mischief. It was not old-fashioned Methodism." *

This was the greatest revival that had ever occurred in Baltimore. Asbury, in his Journal of September, 1789, says: "Many of the children of Methodists are the happy subjects of this glorious revival. We have more members in Baltimore town and Point than in any city or town on the continent besides." The impulse of that revival has been seen in the great growth and influence of Methodism in the city that witnessed the organization of the Church.

The revival was also general in Maryland. At Phillips's "the fire," says Asbury, "spread throughout the whole neighborhood." At Liberty "the Almighty," he says, "is working among the people." At Seneca, he exclaims, "O what hath God wrought! Many precious souls have been brought to the knowledge of salvation." At Rowles's he records "fifty or sixty souls profess to have been brought to God in a few weeks. We had a shout, and a soul converted to God." At Daniel Evans's, he writes,

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," July 22, 1836.

"The Lord has now made bare his arm, and brought in forty or fifty young people." At Bush Forest Chapel Asbury says, "The Lord has visited this neighborhood, and I suppose, from report, fifty souls have been converted to God." Ezekiel Cooper writes from Baltimore: "The country circuits are flaming. The preachers are much alive; the fire runs as in stubble. On the other side of the Chesapeake Bay there is a mighty work; hundreds, I hear of, in different parts, turning to God. I know not but these earthquakes of the Lord's power and love will soon run through the continent. O Lord, hasten the time!"

Thus the new Church, in the region where, at the beginning of 1785, it flung its banner to the sky, is seen in 1789 in hot and victorious battle. It boldly pressed the enemy and assailed his strongholds of prejudice and sin. From various quarters were heard the shoutings of ransomed victors, and the glad trophies were a great multitude.

Not only in the south-land were the triumphs glorious, but also northward. Indeed, Asbury, on October 3, 1789, wrote to Morrell: "The Lord is glorious through the continent. In Baltimore, the work goes on rapidly indeed; we have eight hundred in society. I expect an earthquake of the Lord's power will go from north to south, and from east to west. But few circuits where the work does not revive."

Early in January, 1790, a flame of revival flashed out in the city of New York. Thomas Morrell, who was stationed there then, says that on the fourth it "began in the prayer-meeting, and on the twelfth it broke out in the church." He says that "perhaps about four hundred were converted in about eight weeks." There were two hundred accessions during the revival, and subsequently many others joined. Morrell says: "From this revival we may date the prosperity of our Church in New York." Thus, while Haggerty was triumphing in Baltimore, Morrell, who was by him won to Christ a few years before in New Jersey,

was shouting victory at the head of the conquering host in New York. The work in the metropolis was not only great, it was also enduring. Four years later Morrell wrote concerning the converts which that revival gave to the New York church: "Very few of them fell away. Most of them continue faithful."

New Jersey also received a powerful religious impulse. In the southern half of the State "there was a most wonderful work of grace." In Salem County alone hundreds were converted. The Rev. G. A. Raybold says that when he was quite young one of the preachers gave him "an account in part of that great work of God." The increase in New Jersey was over six hundred for the year.

One of the preachers who labored in the great awakening in New Jersey this year—1789—was Sylvester Hutchinson—a son of thunder. He was strong in faith, but small in stature. While stopping at a lodging-place in his Salem Circuit a couple of young ladies attempted to amuse themselves by bantering him upon his small size. He suddenly lifted his head from a reclining posture and slowly and solemnly exclaimed:

"My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
Damnation and the dead;
What horrors seize a guilty soul
Upon a dying bed!"

The words recited by the preacher, and his manner, affected the young women so deeply that they rushed from his presence weeping. No rest or peace did they find until they obtained the only balm that can heal the broken in heart.

A man overtook Hutchinson on the road and sought to engage him in conversation. "How do you do? Which way are you traveling?" he asked.

"I," said the youthful preacher, "do the Lord's work. You do the devil's. I am on the way to heaven. You are going to hell, where fire and brimstone are

the fuel, and the smoke of torment ascendeth for ever and ever."

The interlocutor was startled, and, putting spurs to his horse, rode away; but at the next meeting he was found among the penitents, weeping, and became an eminent disciple.*

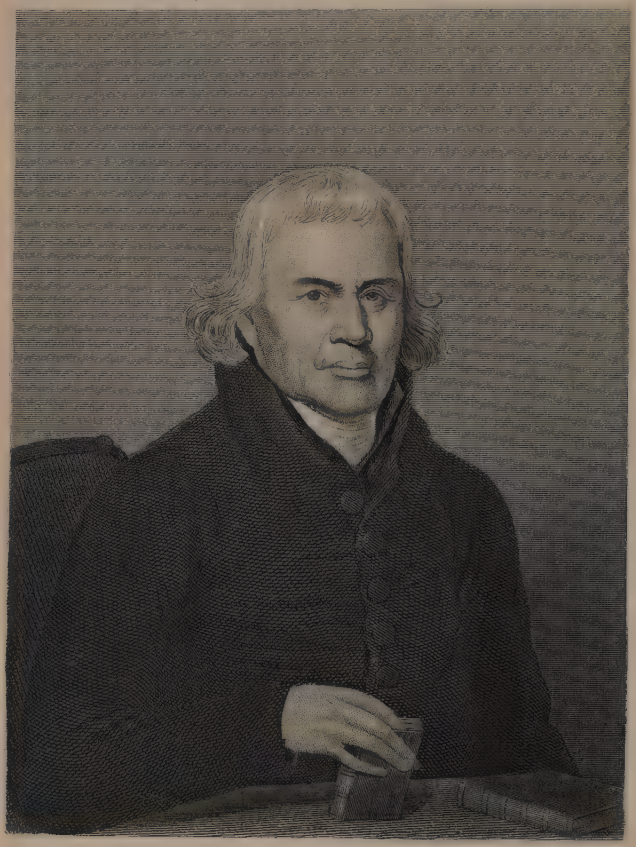
In June, 1790, Asbury writes: "Jersey flames with religion; some hundreds are converted."

Thus in the period between the Conferences of 1787 and those of 1790—three years—we see the flame of revival sweep from Carolina to New York. Amid mighty praying, masterful preaching, powerful exhorting, singing, weeping, wailings, and shoutings, the work of God rushed like a tempest. By day and by night, in preaching houses and in barns, in the field and in the cottage, in the street, on the highway, and in the woods, the revival swept on. Opposers and persecutors, whatever their prowess, were as helpless in its presence as giants in the rapids of Niagara. The cry of the reviler was often turned into the wail of the penitent, and the curse of the persecutor into the shout of the saved. In that marvelous and eternally memorable period American Methodism was baptized of God for its world-wide mission of spiritual conquest. The Methodist Episcopal Church entered upon that three-years' period of mighty conflict and mightier victory feeble in numbers and in human resources. Her total membership numbered less than twenty-six thousand, and her ministry but one hundred and thirty-three. She came out of it ablaze with shekinal splendors, with a membership of fifty-seven thousand six hundred and thirty-one, and with a ministry two hundred and twenty-seven strong. At the close of that wonderful epoch, the net increase of members was greater by nearly six thousand than was the whole membership at its beginning, after twenty-one years of Methodist effort in the United States.

* Raybold's "Methodism in West Jersey."

The increase of the year 1789 alone was glorious. It was found, says Thomas Ware, "at the close of the several Conferences for 1790 that there had been gathered into the fold more than fourteen thousand, a greater number than had crowned the labors of any previous year."

When, five years previously, the Church was organized, the latest report gave less than fifteen thousand members. Now, palpitating with victory, the Methodist Episcopal Church stood forth the wonder of the nation, with a valorous host of well-nigh threescore thousand members marshaled under her triumphant banner. Henceforth she is to march at the head of the evangelical forces of the continent, and to be a chief agent in spreading the Gospel over the world. The secret of this sudden and great success was power from on high. The words of Asbury, uttered ten years before, were now strikingly fulfilled: "The Methodists will grow because they preach growing doctrines."



Francis Asbury

CHAPTER XII.

FRANCIS ASBURY.

FRANCIS ASBURY was one of the greatest of religious leaders. He was the chief founder, organizer, and apostle of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. No complete history of his life and labors has ever been published. Therefore the Church now, nearly seventy years after his death, scarcely comprehends how gigantic was his ecclesiastical stature. Abundant facts, some of which it is our grateful privilege to relate, show that this captain of the Lord's host is fit to stand in the company of Paul, of Luther, and of Wesley, as one of the most masterful souls of all the Christian ages.

Francis Asbury was born in Staffordshire, England, August 20, 1745. Grace shaped his youth and gave inspiration to his subsequent life. At the age of fifteen he was brought to Jesus Christ, who, he says, "graciously justified my guilty soul through faith in his precious blood." He was charmed with the beauty of holiness. He says: "About sixteen I experienced a marvelous display of the grace of God, which some might think was full sanctification, and was, indeed, very happy, though in an ungodly family. At about seventeen I began to hold public meetings, and between seventeen and eighteen to exhort and preach. When about twenty-one I went through Staffordshire and Gloucestershire in the place of a traveling preacher; and the next year through Bedfordshire, Sussex, etc. In 1769 I was appointed assistant in Northamptonshire, and the next year traveled in Wiltshire. September 3, 1771, I embarked for America."

The ship which brought that young missionary hither

bore a freight far richer than that of the ship which carried Cæsar. In his person were embodied, beyond what any mortal could then have suspected, the moral and spiritual destinies of the continent to which he sailed. He came as a warrior of the Cross, to build a kingdom not of this world. For nearly forty-five years he was to travel, preach, plan, and execute for the highest welfare of the great land that was to become so rapidly populous, and of the Republic whose foundations were soon to be laid. He was to be the chief architect of a Church whose walls were to rise under his wise and vigilant superintendence, and whose vast growth and influence were to be inseparably connected with the fortunes of one of the greatest and the freest of the nations.

It was a fortunate day for the cause of evangelical religion in America when, October 27, 1771, the youthful Asbury, escaping the perils of a treacherous sea, stepped upon the shore at Philadelphia. Henceforth, till "in age and feebleness extreme" he should "cease at once to work and live," he was to be the most influential instrument of the most successful and beneficent religious movement of the western hemisphere.

What were Asbury's qualifications for his great mission, and how was that mission by him fulfilled?

He had, in an eminent degree, the chief qualification of a spiritual leader, namely, love to God and love for souls. Well might he have said, with Paul, "The love of Christ constraineth" me. The language of the holy psalmist was that of his adoring heart: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." This was not a fitful feeling, it was the steady, living experience of Asbury for fifty-five years. He toiled not alone because it was his duty to labor, but because he delighted to do the will of Him whom his soul loved. "God," he writes, "is with me, and has all my heart. I am not sensible of any thing contrary to humble, thankful,

constant love to God, pitying love for poor sinners, and melting, sympathetic love for the dear ministers and people of God." In June, 1774, he wrote: "My heart seems wholly devoted to God, and he favors me with power over all outward and inward sin. My affections appear to be quite weaned from all terrestrial objects. Some people, if they felt as I do at present, would, perhaps, conclude that they were saved from all indwelling sin. O, my God, save me and keep me every moment of my life!"

His love for God and souls was stronger than his love for the dearest earthly objects. To come as a missionary to this new and strange land he parted with father and mother. He was their only boy—their only living child. They were very dear to him; but Christ was dearer. When he had been here nearly nine years he exclaimed, "O what must my dear parents feel for my absence! Ah, surely nothing in this world should keep me from them but the care of souls; and nothing else could excuse me before God!" He preached and travailed for souls. In Baltimore, in the winter of 1774, he wrote: "My heart was oppressed with inexpressible feelings for the inhabitants of Baltimore. I am pressed under them as a cart full of sheaves, and would rather be employed in the most servile offices than preach to them, if it were not from a sense of duty to God, and a desire to be instrumental in saving their souls. If honor and worldly gain were held out as motives to this painful work, they would to me appear lighter than vanity. But, Lord, thou knowest my motives and my ends; O prosper thou the work of my heart and my hands."

In the summer of 1775 Asbury speaks of interruption in his services "by the clamor of arms, and preparations for war." He then says: "My business is to be more intensely devoted to God; then

> "'The rougher our way, the shorter our stay;
> The tempests that rise
> Shall gloriously hurry our souls to the skies.'"

How earnestly and fully he was devoted to God, and to the work of God, is shown by a record in his Journal nearly four years later. He says: "After preaching had to ride twelve miles for my dinner. In this our labor we have to encounter hunger, heat, and many restless nights, with mosquitoes, unwholesome provisions, and bad water. But all this is for souls. Were it for silver I should require a great sum; but the Lord is not unrighteous to forget our labor of love, and our reward is with him."

Asbury lived in communion with God. To a degree, perhaps, seldom ever equaled, he was a man of prayer. Continually traveling amid forests, he became much accustomed to pray in woody solitudes. "The shady groves," he says, "are witnesses to my retired and sweetest hours. To sit and melt, and bow alone before the Lord, while the melody of the birds warbles from tree to tree—how delightful." From New England to Georgia, and thence to Ohio, the forests were his closet. In the summer of 1780 he makes this record: "After dinner I was alone in the woods an hour." On March 27, 1787, he wrote: "I went alone into the woods and had sweet converse with God." April 27, 1788: "I went alone into the woods, and found my soul profitably solitary in sweet meditation and prayer." April 23, 1792: "I found it good to get alone in the woods and converse with God." In August, of the same year, he writes, "I was pleased to enjoy the privilege of retiring alone to the cooling sylvan shades in frequent converse with my best Friend." In April, 1795, he says: "My comfort was in the woods with the Lord."

Sometimes he could not readily reach the woods, nor yet find retirement where he lodged. He, however, would find some way to enjoy his devotions. In June, 1782, he writes: "I spoke to about one hundred poor people, whom I exhorted to *seek* that they might *find*. After dinner I retired and sat down on a log beside the water for nearly

two hours and had sweet communion with God. It is not the place, nor the posture of the body, that constitutes the real worshiper; yet at proper times and convenient places it is good to kneel before the Lord our Maker."

The subject of his prayers was, first of all, his own spiritual need. He hungered and thirsted after righteousness and sought to be filled. Thus on August 1, 1777, he says: "My soul was on stretch for a greater degree of holiness, and deeper communion with God.

> "'Thee my spirit grasps to meet,
> This my one, my ceaseless prayer,
> Make, O make my heart thy seat,
> O set up thy kingdom there.'"

About a year later he writes: "Seven times a day do I bow my knees, to utter my complaints before him and to implore an increase of his grace. But, after all and in the midst of all, I can feelingly say, I am an unprofitable servant. But, though unworthy, utterly unworthy, I am blest with the sweet gales of God's love. Blessed breezes! how they cheer and refresh my drooping soul!"

He sought to be holy. His Journal attests how he groaned after holiness. Monday, August 4, 1783, he says: "Rose early to pour out my soul to God. I want to live to him. To be holy in heart, in life, and in conversation —this is my mark, my prize, my all—to be, in my measure, like God." At another time he wrote: "I hope yet to endure to the end, but must be more sanctified:

> "'Lord, hasten the hour, thy kingdom bring in,
> And give me the power to live without sin.'"

On another occasion he exclaimed: "O, my God! when shall I be established in purity?" Again he says: "I am still seeking full and final salvation." At another time he exclaims: "O for faith to be saved from all sin!" Soon after he writes: "Think I am more given up than ever I was in my life. I see the need of living near to God, to be able to preach the travails of God's people, to get freedom

and love to bear with sinners, and to deal faithfully. I am laboring for God, and my soul is pressing after full salvation." His joy, too, was sometimes full, his realizations of God were great. He says at one time: "Last Monday night it appeared to me that I had as deep a sense of God as though I could see, touch, handle, and feel him." At another time he said: "I was melted and filled with God."

In writing to Mr. Wesley from North Carolina, March 20, 1784, Mr. Asbury refers to his Christian experience thus: "My soul is daily fed, and I find abundant sweetness in God. Sometimes I am ready to say he hath purified my heart, and then again I feel and fear. Upon the whole I hope I am more spiritual than ever I have been in time past. I see the necessity of preaching a full and present salvation from all sin. Whenever I do this I feel myself, and so do also my hearers. I find it is good to use frequent, fervent prayer, without which a man cannot continue qualified to preach the Gospel." *

Asbury had trials, too, often severe, which he took to the mercy-seat. Those trials were various. Sometimes they were from the world, sometimes from the flesh, sometimes from those who should rather have given him comfort. Amid them all he found great consolation in prayer. "I often," he says, "have it whispered in my ear what certain folks are pleased to say of my being an Englishman.† How can I help that? I am not ashamed of it. But I am seeking souls and Zion's glory. Heaven is my country.

"'There is my house and portion fair;
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home;
For me my elder brethren stay,
And angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come."

* "Arminian Magazine," London, 1786.

† Dr. Bangs, in his sermon preached at the opening of the John Street Church, January 4, 1818, says of Asbury, that "the troubles produced by the war, the jealousy excited against all Englishmen, rendered his situation extremely unpleasant." See also page 100.

"He received once an anonymous letter of abuse. He had just come from his knees in the closet; he forthwith returned to his knees." At another time he writes: "Great and fiery trials; great succeeding consolations."

Asbury also prayed for guidance and protection in his great travels and labors. For example, in June, 1783, he writes: "I went alone to the silent woods and my soul was much melted in prayer, entreating the Lord to go with me and preserve me through all my weary journeys." Those journeys were perilous as well as wearying, and he felt the need of Almighty protection. At one time he writes: "Riding after preaching, my chaise was shot through; but the Lord preserved my person." Bishop Whatcoat describes, in his Journal, a journey he took with Bishop Asbury on his first visit to Kentucky, in 1790. He says they "passed through the wilderness about one hundred and fifty miles. The first day we came to the new station. Here we lay under cover, but some of the company had to watch all night. The next two nights we watched by turns—some watching while others lay down. As there was not a good understanding between the savages and the white people, we traveled in jeopardy; but I think I never traveled with more solemn awe and serenity of mind. As we fed our horses three times a day, so we had prayer three times."

The subjects of Asbury's prayers included not only his own spiritual needs, protection, and guidance, but also his ministry, the Church, the preachers, his parents, the country, the world. The mighty prayers of this man of God, which he offered in America every day and every night for almost forty-five years, are yet descending in benedictions upon the Church and the country he so greatly loved. When the chariot of God bore him home he left to American Methodism, and to America as well, the legacy of his prayers. Once more let us glance at Asbury on his knees.

In September, 1783, he writes: "I find it expedient to spend an hour in prayer for myself alone, and an hour each morning and evening for all the preachers and people."

As a soldier of Christ he esteemed the closet as his fortress. It was the arsenal whence he drew his armor. He says: "It is plain to me the devil will let us read always if we will not pray. But prayer is the sword of the preacher, the life of the Christian, the terror of hell, and the devil's plague." In the last days of 1776 he said: "My present practice is to set apart about three hours out of every twenty-four for private prayer." In 1777 he wrote: "I have given myself to private prayer seven times a day, and found my heart much drawn out in behalf of the preachers, the societies, especially the new places, and my aged parents. And while thus exercised my soul has been both quickened and purified." A few days later he records: "Much temptation has urged me to much prayer, so that I have often retired as often as ten or twelve times a day to call upon my God." A little more than a year later he says: "I purposed in my own mind to spend ten minutes out of every hour, when awake, in the duty of prayer." After nearly another year had passed he writes: "Though I now pray not less than ten times a day, yet I find I have need to pray without ceasing." Some months later he says: "Am resolved to spend an hour in devotion before I leave the room each morning. I am more than ever pressed with the weight of my work and the worth of souls. Ah! what is preaching without living to God? It is a daily unction we want, that the word may be like a hammer and fire from our mouths, to break hearts and kindle life and fire." Later still Asbury exclaims: "I am for attending my twelve times of prayer, and resisting the devil steadfastly in the faith. I am much humbled before the Lord. A blessing I want and will not cease crying to the Lord for it." Yet later he writes: "I see the need of returning to my twelve times of prayer.

I have been hindered and interrupted by pains and fevers." After all this he exclaims: "I think my soul momently pants after more of God."

The Rev. John Chalmers was probably the first who was styled a traveling companion of Bishop Asbury, and he witnessed how he prayed. Mr. Chalmers wrote: "I was in early life the traveling companion, for a short time, of the senior Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the venerable and Rev. Francis Asbury. About the years 1788, 1789, I was with him not only in the pulpit, congregation, and sacramental table, but often in the closet, where I have witnessed his agony in secret, and long stay. I wondered why he remained so long on his knees, when I had prayed for all I thought I needed for myself and the world." *

The Rev. Joseph Travis says: "I knew him to remain on his knees an hour or more in private prayer." The Rev. Thomas Smith made a journey with Bishop Asbury. He says: "At eleven o'clock he came to let me know that he was about to retire, and told me to be sure and wake him at break of day. When I entered his room the next morning with a candle he smiled, and said, 'Thomas, it is hard burning both ends of the candle at once.' He referred to his being late to bed, and rising before day. Before the sun was up we were on our way, having forty miles to ride by eleven o'clock, then preach, and ride twenty miles more, as we were pressed for time to meet the Conference. We left Milford the next morning at break of day for Wilmington. It is surprising how much time he devoted to secret prayer throughout these long journeys."† The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, in his Semi-centennial Sermon, said of Asbury: "He was great in prayer."

* The Rev. John Chalmers, in "Christian Advocate and Journal," New York, March 6, 1829.

† "Experience and Gospel Labors of Rev. Thomas Smith." By Rev. David Dailey. New York, 1848.

The Rev. Henry Boehm was present on an occasion when Drs. Rush and Physic, of Philadelphia, called upon Bishop Asbury. They had ministered to him in his physical sufferings, and "as they were separating, the Bishop inquired what he should pay for their professional services. They answered: 'Nothing, only an interest in your prayers.' Said Bishop Asbury: 'As I do not like to be in debt, we will pray now;' and he knelt down and offered a most impressive prayer that God would bless and reward them for their kindness to him." *

His gift of prayer in public was great. In this he seems to have surpassed all others. "Had he," says Ware, "been equally eloquent in preaching, he would have excited universal admiration as a pulpit orator. But when he was heard for the first time the power and unction with which he prayed would naturally so raise the expectations of his auditors that they were liable to be disappointed with his preaching; for, although he always preached well, in his sermons he seldom, if ever, reached that high and comprehensive flow of thought and expression—that expansive and appropriate diction—which always characterized his prayers. This may be accounted for, in part at least, from the fact stated by the late Freeborn Garrettson, in preaching his funeral sermon. 'He prayed,' said Garrettson, 'the best, and he prayed the most, of any man I ever knew. His long-continued rides prevented his preaching as often as some others, but he could find a throne of grace, if not a congregation, upon the road.'"

One day, after the close of a Conference in Charleston, Asbury and one or two preachers were on the road, when "they came in sight of one of the old parish churches, a venerable ante-revolutionary edifice. Riding into the grove which surrounded it, Bishop Asbury proposed that they should halt and lunch. The little party dismounted and secured their horses. The Bishop then wondered if they

* Boehm's Reminiscences.

could get into the church. This was easily effected. 'We will go into God's house and have prayers,' said the Bishop, leading the way. He ascended the pulpit and engaged in prayer. The spirit of grace and supplication was poured upon him in full measure. His intercessions rose into vehement pleadings with God; and he had boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Christ. The glory of God seemed to fill the house, and the refreshment of a special visitation from on high was realized by them all. The Bishop's prayer had brought them to heaven's gate. After retiring from the church, 'Well,' said the Bishop, 'God has graciously fed our souls with the bread of heaven —let us take some refreshment for the body.' Long years after this little incident had occurred one of the party related it to me, with deep emotion. It is a touching revelation of character. How much and how well this man prayed!"*

A man who thus abounded in prayer was, of course, humble. In the summer of 1793 he met an old German, who, he says, "shook me by the hand and said he wished he might be worthy to wash my feet. Yea, thought I, if you knew what a poor, sinful creature I am, you would hardly look at one so unworthy. But Jesus lives. O precious Christ, thou art mine and I am thine!"

Though he was so unceasing and abundant in labor, Asbury could not boast. Rather, he was humbled by his sense of the imperfections of his service. "We try to do good," he writes, "but who among us try to do all the good they can? For myself, I leave no company without fears of not having discharged my duty. Were it not for Jesus, who would be saved? When I have preached, I feel as though I had need to do it over again; and it is the same with all my performances."

"Bishop Asbury," says Dr. Wightman, "was a man, if not of feeble constitution, at least delicate; often sick;

* The Rev. Dr. Wightman in "Biographical Sketches."

often wearied; who felt the cold which he braved; who trembled at the roaring torrent which he hesitated not to plunge through; upon whom the summer heat fell with an oppressive sense of languor; who was many a time pinched with hunger, when a crust of bread would have been thankfully received. His sufferings were manifold. But let it be well observed that no particle of merit was allowed by the apostle of American Methodism to attach to these sufferings. No fanatical asceticism with its 'righteousness by starvation' was allowed to obtain foothold among the elements of his personal piety. He endured hardness as a good soldier of Christ because the circumstances of the time and country involved the necessity of such an endurance, not because austerities were good and desirable, *per se.* His sole ground of acceptance before God was the merit of Christ crucified, apprehended by faith, and with that merit no lower and fancied merit of severities and sufferings was allowed to participate."

His traveling companion, the Rev. J. W. Bond, reported Bishop Asbury as saying, near to the close of his career: "Were I disposed to boast my boasting would be found true. I obtained religion near the age of thirteen. At the age of sixteen I began to preach, and traveled some time in Europe. At twenty-six I left my native land, and bade adieu to my weeping parents, and crossed the boisterous ocean to spend the balance of my days in a strange land, partly inhabited by savages. I have traveled through heat and cold for forty-five years. In thirty years I have crossed the Alleghany Mountains fifty-eight times. I have slept in the woods without necessary food or raiment. In the Southern States I have waded swamps, and led my horse for miles, where I took colds that brought on the diseases which are now preying on my system, and must soon terminate in death. But my mind is still the same—that it is through the merits of Christ that I am to be saved."* At one time he said: "I

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," New York, April 17, 1829.

would lie down and be trodden under foot rather than injure a single soul." Asbury was afraid of the least sin, and in the battle of faith, which he ceaselessly fought, his dependence was ever on Jesus, the Captain of his salvation. He exclaims: "It is a sin in thought that I am afraid of. None but Jesus can support us, by his merit, his Spirit, his righteousness, his intercession. That is, Christ in all, for all, through all, and in every means and word and work."

A man who walked with God as did Asbury, might be warmly attached to his own people, as he was, but he could never be a bigot. Christian catholicity was beautifully illustrated in the life of this great leader of Methodism. In his Journal, in 1774, is this record: "Blessed be God for so many who experience the same work of grace which we preach, and at the same time are not of us. This is a great confirmation of the work of God. And 'whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven,' of every denomination, 'the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'" Again he says: "My spirit has been much united to the faithful people of God of every denomination." And again: "I see God will work among Mennonites, Dunkers, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Dutch, English, no matter; the cause belongs to God." Later he says: "I met with a pious Baptist. Glory to God for what religion there is still to be found among all sects and denominations of people!" In 1802 he writes: "I dined with Mr. Ramsay, a Presbyterian minister, at his own house on Friday, and he with me to-day at my lodgings. We had quite a Christian interview." Yet later he speaks of two Presbyterian ministers, Brown and M'Nare, being present at one of his services, and adds: "I had a Christian interview with them, and I learned, with pleasure, that their labors had been owned and blessed among the Scotch Presbyterians." Again, in 1806, he says: "I spent a night under the roof of my very dear

brother in Christ, George Newton, a Presbyterian minister, an Israelite indeed."

Asbury, like Wesley, was a man of one book. "I find," he says, "great sweetness in reading the Bible, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Other books have too great a tendency to draw us from this, the best of books. I therefore intend to read more in this, and less in all others." Again he says: "Arose as I commonly do, before five o'clock in the morning, to study the Bible. I find none like it, and find it of more consequence to a preacher to know his Bible well, than all the languages or books in the world; for he is not to preach these, but the word of God." At the close of an ordination service, in Albany, Asbury lifted up the Bible and with indescribable power exclaimed: "This is the minister's battle-ax; this is his sword; take this, therefore, and conquer." At one time he wrote: "This morning I ended the reading of my Bible through in about four months. It is hard work for me to find time for this. All I read and write I owe to early rising. If I were not to rise always by five and sometimes at four o'clock, I should have no time, only to eat my breakfast, pray in the family, and get ready for my journey, as I must travel every day."

He read the Bible not only in the English version, but also in the original. In 1777 he says: "I have been reading some of both Greek and Hebrew." Later he writes: "My meditations in the Hebrew Bible have afforded me great pleasure. This is the book I study for improvement."* Yet again he says: "I applied myself to the Greek and Latin Testament." Still later he writes: "I spent much of my time in reading the Bible and the Greek Testament."

* Bishop Asbury's Hebrew Bible is still preserved. It was exhibited on Methodist Historical Day at Ocean Grove, August 12, 1884, by the Rev. R. J. Andrews, of Hightstown, N. J. It is in the possession of the family of the late Rev. Dr. George Peck.

It may be asked, How did he acquire his knowledge of the dead languages? He says, March 6, 1793, "I have been employed in studying the Hebrew tones and points; this being my horseback study."

Asbury was a man of faith. "Sometimes," he wrote, "I think, will that Infinite Being we call God, who commands kingdoms, continents, and worlds, take care of such a worm as I? Then I consider he is Infinite, and cannot be hurried so as to forget any person. He can keep me as securely as if there were none but myself in the world." His faith was not feeble; it was gigantic. By it he realized the Invisible. By it the future was to him as if it were present. By it he interpreted his Bible and the events of his life. A pilgrim, traveling in the wilds of America for nearly half a century, his gaze was on the sky, and he beheld the land that is afar off. Beyond the stars he saw his glorious crown. With him all the verities of God were certainties. Though journeying thousands of miles every year over the bad roads of a new country, his treasure and his heart were in the New Jerusalem. "Heaven is my country," he said. "It is not needful," he says, "to tell all my outward difficulties and inward sufferings; heaven will make up for all." Again he says: "My soul is like a weaned child. My spirit has been greatly assaulted and divinely supported in God, in Christ, in the hope of *rest, rest, rest, eternal rest.*" Again, his eyes piercing the skies, he exclaims: "Hail, all hail, eternal glory."

In a letter of June 3, 1803, to Charles Atmore, of England, Asbury said: "I am now in the fifty-eighth year of my age, and frequently subject to inflammatory rheumatism and sometimes disabled for a season. Then I revive again and limp along. I was born and brought up in a temperate climate with great indulgence, and lived in retirement till I was twenty-one years of age. Now my constitution is broken through heats and colds, and I have gray hairs in

abundance. I have been thirty-seven years in the Connection, and thirty-two in America. I hope to hold out a little longer, and then to meet my dear English brethren, preachers and people, in a better world.

"'There all the ship's company meet,
Who sail with the Saviour beneath.'"

By faith Asbury lived in the world, and yet was not of it. Probably no man in America ever surpassed him in heavenly-mindedness. Down to his coronation, at threescore years and ten, his citizenship was in heaven. Ten years before his death, being then sixty years of age, he wrote: "Company does not amuse, Congress does not interest me. I am a man of another world, in mind and calling. I am Christ's, and for the service of his Church."

In the autumn of 1804 he was sick for many days, at a country house in Pennsylvania. He suffered privations as well as sickness in his confinement, but his faith was his support. "I have not had a more severe attack," he writes, "since I came to America. The doctor was seldom right, and medicines were not to be had, nor indeed the comfort and alleviations that surround a sick-bed in the cities. But the best of all was, *God was with us.* God, the glorious Lord, appeared. I was led into the visions of God. I shouted his praise." In this long illness he was favored with the care of his dear friend, Bishop Whatcoat, who says: "I found Bishop Asbury laid up with a bilious fever. I stayed with him about thirty-two days." *

After his recovery, Asbury, under date of November 7, 1804, wrote to the Rev. Daniel Hitt concerning his sickness. He says: "I have been sick on Monongahela Circuit about sixty days. I must needs preach at Uniontown and at Jacob Murphy's—ride twelve miles through the hot sun and some rain. This brought on a chill and burning fever, with an inveterate cough. I used two emetics. The

* "Whatcoat's Journal," in Memoirs by Phœbus.

second helped me a little. I was bled four times, and blistered as many. The disease had no intermission for fifty days. I gave up my visit to the east. Brother Whatcoat came up with me, and stayed until within two days of my recovery."

In 1814, less than two years before his death, Asbury in a letter speaks of "six weeks' confinement—almost given up by my doctors and friends." He adds: "If the gates of death were near, they were gates of glory to me. Reduced beyond measure, total loss of appetite, sixteen times blistered, six glistered, three times bled—heaven, glory all in sight. The work of God plain; to view the rectitude of my intention in all my labors—my martyr's life and readiness for a martyr's death."

When this hero of faith walked amid the shadows of his life's late even-tide, and began to lay down the great burden he had carried so long, his faith towered to the very domes of the golden city, and brought to his heart the rapture of heaven. He is now only about four months from the end. His wearying travels, incessant privations, and unremitting labors are almost done. See the great veteran, as he begins to lay aside his well-worn armor, to partake of the joy of endless victory. How does it seem to him now? Hear him: "My eyes fail. I will resign the stations to Bishop M'Kendree; I will take away my feet. It is my fifty-fifth year of ministry and forty-fifth year of labor in America. My mind enjoys great peace and divine consolation. Whether health, life, or death, good is the will of the Lord. I will trust him, yea, and will praise him. He is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever! Glory, glory, glory!"

Paul! Asbury! The words of Paul might have been almost as fittingly uttered by Asbury: "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea,

in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

In the Notes on the Discipline prepared by him and Bishop Coke, Asbury did say of the Bishops, of whom he was chief: "Their salary is sixty-four dollars a year and their traveling expenses. With this salary they are to travel about six thousand miles a year, in much patience, and sometimes in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, through honor and dishonor, in evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold they live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

The words of Paul again might well have been the utterance of Asbury: "I labored more abundantly than they all." Paul in Rome, looking to the end of his toils, conflicts, sufferings, shouts: "The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Asbury also comes to the time when he must begin to unharness, and he, too, looks to the end, and exclaims: "Whether health, life, or death, good is the will of the Lord. He is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever! Glory, glory, glory!" That exultant shout of the falling apostle of American Methodism, which bursts so triumphantly across the silence of nearly seventy years to the first Centennial jubilee of the Church he toiled so hard and so long to build, should be only less inspiring to the militant host of God than the last victorious shout of the great apostle to the Gentiles. And especially should the millions of American Methodists, the inheritors of the faith and the labors of Asbury, catch

up that shout of their ascended leader amid the thanksgivings and exultations of their great Centennial epoch, and send it like musical thunder from ocean to ocean—"Glory, glory, glory!"

We have now examined Asbury's qualifications for his great mission, so far as these were comprised in his love to God and souls, his devotion, his humility, his knowledge of the Bible, his catholicity, and his faith. We will now turn to the contemplation of his mental and physical endowments.

Asbury possessed a clear, sound, balanced intellect. He was largely endowed with the saving faculty of common sense. Though deeply devout he was far removed from fanaticism. In regard to the question whether he should go to Virginia, in 1781, to meet a crisis that arose out of the perilous contention about the sacraments, he said: "I do not look for impulses or revelations. The voice of my brethren and concurrent circumstances will determine me in this matter." His views of religion were sober and rational. He says: "What some people take for religion is nothing but the power of the natural passions. It is true, real religion cannot exist without peace and love and joy. But, then, real religion is real holiness. And all sensations without a strong disposition for holiness are but delusive."

He was keen-sighted mentally, and also far-sighted. He was competent to measure an exigence, and to dispose of it readily and skillfully. He was, perhaps, scarcely ever foiled in an extremity. He was fertile in resources, and so met the occasion as it occurred. Such was the combination of mental qualities in this remarkable man that he was never foolish, but almost always wise.

Probably no man in America ever surpassed him in the facility and mastery with which he adapted means to ends. The one end he sought was the divine glory and the salvation of souls. In compassing that sublime purpose it was

his office to plan for and direct others. Hence he deemed authority to be indispensable to him, and of that authority he was jealous. The office of overseership came to him, as he thought, in the order of God.

His coming to America, in his view, was of God. He said: "I believe God hath sent me to this country." He also believed that he should remain. Amidst the distress of the Revolution he and Shadford made the question of their return to England an occasion of special prayer. Mr. Shadford says: "I said to Brother Asbury, let us have a day of fasting and prayer, that the Lord may direct us; for we never were in such circumstances as we are now since we were Methodist preachers. We did so, and in the evening I asked him how he found his mind? He said he did not see his way clear to go to England. I told him I could not stay, as I believed I had done my work here at present; and that it was as much impressed upon my mind to go home now as it had been to come over to America. He replied: 'Then one of us must be under a delusion.' I said: 'Not so. I may have a call to go, and you to stay.' And I believe we both obeyed the call of Providence. We said we must part, though we loved as David and Jonathan." * Asbury, in a letter to Atmore, said: "I thought when I came to America four years would be long enough for me to stay; but the children whom God had given us asked, 'Will you leave us in our time of distress?' And so here I am." †

Asbury's position as Superintendent was filled so grandly and so perfectly that it seemed as if he and his office were formed for each other. To execute that office with the highest advantage he required to exercise its full powers as well as to bear its full responsibilities. Hence he was not favorable to any measures which would limit his authority to appoint and to command.

* "Arminian Magazine," London, 1790.

† Letter to Charles Atmore, June 3, 1803.

Asbury's capacity as an ecclesiastical ruler was extraordinary. "His practical, sagacious intellect fitted him admirably for the task of governing. His *forté* was administration. That was the prime necessity of his position, the special demand of the time." The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper says: "Very few, either primitive or modern, ever knew the art better than he of exercising and supporting the pastoral and episcopal influence and authority. He had a particular qualification for governing. His peculiar mind and spirit, his dignified conversation and deportment, his stern reserve, tempered by a social freedom, his authoritative decisions, softened by gentle soothings, his apparent inflexibility and independent opinion placidly yielding to reasonable and amicable accommodations, carried with them an impressive and almost irresistible influence, and gave him a kind of patriarchal ascendency and superiority." He wielded the great power of a Bishop with such fidelity, skill, industry, and success as made the Methodist Episcopal Church the ecclesiastical wonder of the world.

The practical wisdom of Asbury was shown in his grasp of the question of the American Revolution. The other English preachers had no comprehension of it, and their conduct consequently was unwise. Not so Asbury. He compassed the troubled situation. In the same month in which Congress issued the Declaration of Independence, Asbury wrote these prescient words: "The English ships have been coasting to and fro, watching for some advantages; but what can they expect to accomplish without an army of two or three hundred thousand men? And even then there would be but little prospect of their success." The late venerable Henry Boehm says: "When I was with him in Canada he said to me, 'England always had the wrong foot foremost in regard to America.'" Thus in the dark years of the war Asbury penetrated its problem with the insight and sagacity of a statesman.

Mr. Asbury was a true American in his spirit, and a loyal son of his adopted country. In a letter to his parents he said: "America is the young child of God and Providence. Set upon the lap, dandled upon the knees, pressed to the consolatory breasts of mercies unmerited." Late in his life—1811—on entering Canada, he wrote: "My strong affection for the people of the United States came with strange power upon me while I was crossing the line." His keen observation made him awake to the dangers of the country and of the government. He was as faithful in exposing as he was quick in discerning them. One of the chief dangers of the country in his view was intoxicants. In 1812 he was in Pennsylvania, and wrote: "The Germans are decent in their behavior in this neighborhood, and would be more so were it not for vile whisky. This is the prime curse of the United States, and will be, I fear much, the ruin of all that is excellent in morals and government in them." He was a witness of the destruction caused by rum. He says: "The men kill themselves with strong drink before we can get at them." He exclaimed: "O that liquid fire!"

Intellectually, then, Asbury was nobly endowed for the great work that was given to him. Besides, his acquisitions were not small. He was a diligent reader. In February, 1796, he says in his Journal: "I am apprehensive I injure myself by giving too intense application to reading. In my early days I contracted a habit for this, and I cannot easily give it up." At a comparatively early period in his ministry in this country he records that his habit was, in addition to praying in public five times a day, preaching in the open air every other day, and lecturing in prayer-meeting every evening, to read about a hundred pages a day. At times he read more rapidly, for on July 13, 1781, he says: "I have kept close to-day, and have read two hundred pages of Baxter's 'Saint's Rest.'" Under pressure of travel and work he sometimes read much less,

no doubt, yet his mental activity was always remarkable. On March 2, 1781, he writes: "I have read the first and second volumes of Rollins's 'Ancient History,' containing about three hundred pages each, in about two weeks." We have seen already how he read the Holy Scriptures in Hebrew and in Greek.

The Rev. Henry Boehm says: "His Hebrew Bible was his constant companion. The Bishop read a great many books while I was with him. The moment we were in the house, after having laid aside his saddle-bags and greeted the family, he began to read and write." His studies were prosecuted often under serious difficulties. In North Carolina he says: "Here was a cabin with one room, a barn, and stables. I have little time to write or place to read. The barn is my closet for prayer." In Maryland, in the autumn of 1781, he wrote: "I have little leisure for any thing but prayer; seldom more than two hours a day, and that space I wish to spend in retired meditation and prayer. Something might be gained could I pore over a book on horseback, as Mr. Wesley does in England; but this our roads forbid." At another time he said: "I am always on the wing; but it is for God." Yet he became a man of very considerable reading, as the comments he made upon books in his Journal show.

Asbury's gift of utterance was good. He could command attention and make an impression upon an audience. In native eloquence, however, there were preachers who surpassed him. But while some of the men who received their stations at his hands possessed, perhaps, in a larger degree than himself, the subtle charms of the orator, he stood alone in his rugged greatness. No man in American Methodism has attained to the colossal proportions of Francis Asbury. Who in America ever approached him in apostolic labor and masterful administration of religious concerns?

Physically Asbury was well endowed. He suffered, indeed, from physical infirmity, and yet he proved that

his body was capable of vast exertion and endurance. His exposure, travels, labors in Conferences, in the pulpit, and elsewhere, were enough to wear out any organism of flesh; yet he endured as if his sinews were steel. The Rev. Henry Boehm was his companion for five years, and he says: "I traveled forty thousand miles with Bishop Asbury." What, then, must have been the extent of the journeyings of this American apostle in the almost forty-five years of his wanderings over the United States? The Rev. Nicholas Snethen, an earlier traveling companion of Asbury, says: "Mr. Wesley in a year went over a circuit of a little island or two, and therefore he [Asbury] must needs compass a continent. The one went from town to town and, therefore, the other must go from wilderness to wilderness. Thus did he stretch and strain himself, not only beyond another man's line of things, but beyond all human bounds and measures." He could have achieved such unparallelled labor only by a physical organization that was exceedingly tenacious of its vigor.

Asbury was gifted with a melodious voice, which he frequently employed in song. Mr. Boehm says: "He was fond of singing. He had a full bass or organ-like voice, and would often set the tune in public worship. The Bishop often sang as he walked the floor, and this he often did when in deep meditation." Lednum says: "Mr. Asbury was a remarkably good singer, and has been heard to say 'that he had raised up many a son in the Gospel who could outpreach him, but never one who could outsing him;' and he might have added, not one who could outpray him." It is said that he was accustomed to sing to the tune of "Light Street:"

"Still out of the deepest abyss
Of trouble I mournfully cry;
I pine to recover my peace,
To see my Redeemer and die.

"I cannot, I cannot forbear,
These passionate longings for home,
O when shall my spirit be there,
O when will the messenger come."

He is described as having "a ruddy English face," and "an active and determined step." Says Mr. Snethen: "Mr. Asbury, until a few years before his death, when disease would have confined any body but himself, was still interesting in his appearance. He was neat and clean in his person, active and erect in his movements, with a fine set of teeth and an excellent voice."*

With his extraordinary physical, mental, and spiritual endowments, Asbury may be said to have been transcendently qualified for the great mission to which he was appointed.

We come now to inquire, How was that mission by him fulfilled?

Asbury fulfilled his mission with singleness of purpose. His eye was single. Throughout his American career there was a steady concentration of all the resources of his being upon the point of achieving spiritual results. He paused not to buy or to sell. In the year after his arrival in America he wrote to his father and mother: "I am not for making a fortune, but to convert souls to God." With a knowledge of the whole country such as was possessed by no other man, he must have seen fine opportunities to advance his temporal fortunes. He wrote his parents from Baltimore: "I have had opportunities of pursuing fleshly ends, but I abhor them." There is no evidence that he paused an hour in forty-five years to negotiate a bargain. On, on he pushed, through frosty winds and sultry suns, through beating rain and drifting snow, through changeful days and dismal nights, as the servant and messenger and Superintendent of the Churches. Asbury pause in his great work to come down to speculation for the riches of earth!

* Snethen's Letters on "Methodist History." "Wesleyan Repository," vol. i.

Such ends were far beneath his exalted aims. Rather, emerging from some cabin in the wilderness with the dawn, he would mount his horse and ride away in quest of perishing sinners.

In this particular Asbury was the counterpart of Whitefield. Whitefield, in a letter to Wesley, from Queen Anne County, Maryland, of October 14, 1746, says: "If you ask, How is it with me? I answer, Happy in Jesus, the Lord my righteousness. If you ask, What am I doing? Ranging and hunting in the American woods after poor sinners, and resolved, in the strength of Jesus, to pursue the heavenly game more and more. If you ask, With what success? I would answer, (O, amazing grace!) With great success indeed." * Asbury might have appropriated these words of the wonderful preacher with perfect propriety; and, so far as ranging in the American woods was concerned, the words of Whitefield applied even more aptly to Asbury than to himself. In less than six months after Asbury reached America, Mr. Jonathan Bryan wrote from New York to Mr. Wesley, saying: "Mr. Whitefield's preaching was of unspeakable use to many. Thousands will praise God that they ever heard him. But he preached mostly in the sea-port towns, and the most populous parts of the provinces; in the back parts, which are now grown populous, the inhabitants are in a state of deplorable ignorance still." † Mr. Asbury quickly pushed to "the back parts," where the ignorance was "deplorable," and henceforth, until his last triumph, he was found "ranging and hunting in the American woods after poor sinners." He thus ranged the woods, too, with raiment sometimes worn and rent. Nine years after he embarked for America, being in Virginia, he says: "These kind people have made me a dress of Virginia cloth, which I much needed, as my dress approached to raggedness." Mr.

* "Arminian Magazine," 1778, p. 418.

† Ibid., 1785, pp. 167, 168.

Zachary Myles, of Baltimore, in a letter dated February, 1807, says: "Mr. Asbury came into this city wrapped up in a blanket and habited like an Indian, with his own clothes worn out."* Behold this leader of the rising Church! With capacity to rule an empire, or to march legions to conquest, he, in tattered garb, gives his life to hunting in the wilderness for the lost sheep of the good Shepherd, thankfully accepting from pitying hands raiment to protect him from raggedness! If ever a man since Paul exclaimed, "This *one thing* I do," gave all his ransomed powers with a single eye and an unfaltering purpose to the service of God and of redeemed men, surely that man was Francis Asbury.

Asbury, furthermore, fulfilled his mission in the spirit of his Master. Of Jesus it was said, "This man receiveth sinners." He sought not any particular sort of sinners, but sinners. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

We see Mr. Asbury at one time kneeling in prayer with Richard Bassett, a governor of Delaware and a member of Congress, and while they knelt the Comforter came to the rich penitent's heart.† Again we see Asbury, like his Master, seeking the salvation of a solitary woman whom he chanced to meet. "Our horses," he says, "were out of the way, so that we could not pursue our journey. I was desirous to be doing good somewhere, and was led to speak to a woman unknown to me, and I urged her to pray three times a day. She appeared tender, and with tears promised to do so. Perhaps this labor may not be lost."

We have seen Bishop Asbury in the house of Mr. Wells, a merchant in Charleston, travailing in spirit for the salvation of his host, and joyfully recording the fact of the merchant's conversion while he was under his roof. Subsequently we behold the Bishop, in that same merchant's

* "Arminian Magazine," 1807, p. 332.

† Asbury's "Journal," vol. i, p. 362.

kitchen, leading negro bondmen into the liberty of the sons of God; for in Charleston he writes: "At night I met the seeking Africans in Brother Wells's kitchen."

In pursuing his great mission Asbury thought much of the poor. We have seen already how, as he was leaving George Dougherty in charge of the society in Charleston, in 1800, he charged him particularly to care for the black people. "I leave you," he said, "a flower garden and a kitchen garden to cultivate." The kitchen garden comprised the slave portion of the society, the flower garden the white membership. How Bishop Asbury gave his tender sympathy and his personal ministry to the oppressed negroes is shown in the following record, which appears in his Journal:

"I cured a poor African's sore leg by applying a poultice of bread and milk."

While he had compassion upon the oppressed in their physical sufferings, his chief object was to save their souls. When he had been nearly thirteen years a Bishop of the Church, he saw one day a negro in a field, and at once a desire to speak to him rose in his great, tender soul. He says: "As I came along on my return, he was at a stone wall within eight or nine feet of me. Poor creature! he seemed struck at my counsel, and gave me thanks. O! it was in going down into the Egypt of South Carolina after those poor souls of Africans I have lost my health, if not my life in the end. The will of the Lord be done!"

The black people loved him. How could they help loving such a benefactor? He relates the case of a poor black woman, sixty years old, who supported herself, in part, by picking "opium,"* and for the rest was a pensioner upon charity. She brought him a French crown, telling him she had been distressed for him, and he must accept it. "But no," he says; "although I have not three dollars

* Probably "oakum."

to travel three thousand miles, I will not take money from the poor."

In seeking the salvation of the poor Asbury paused not for color. The *poor*, black or white, he sought to save. Once when at Long Island he wrote: "The people on this island who hear the Gospel are generally poor, and these are the kind I want and expect to get." Later he says: "To begin at the right end of the work is to go first to the poor. These *will*, the rich *may possibly*, hear the truth." Dining at a public house in Connecticut: "Our host," he says, "told us it was the misfortune of the Methodists to fall in with some of the most ignorant, poor, and disreputable people in the State. My answer was, 'The poor have the Gospel preached to them'—that it had been aforetime asked, 'Have any of the rulers believed on him?'" In 1810 he wrote: "Gave a special charge concerning the poor. O, let me ever remember these!" Again he exclaimed: "O God, give us the poor!"

In the month of March, 1794, Bishop Asbury was in North Carolina. He made this record there: "Spent the evening with dear Brother S., in his clean cabin." Yet the cabins were not always clean, nor the fare agreeable. In his labors among the poor Bishop Asbury often encountered things which were repugnant to his tastes as a gentleman and trying to his faith as a Christian. In the year 1811, when he had been traveling in America almost forty years, he exclaims: "O the clover of Baltimore circuit! Ease, ease! Not for me. Toil, suffering, coarse food, hard lodging, bugs, fleas, and certain *etceteras* besides."

The zeal of Bishop Asbury may be said to have been apostolic. February, 1796, in Charleston, he says, in his Journal: "I have written in the most pointed manner to my dear brethren in Baltimore to establish prayer-meetings in every part of the town." The following letter, dated Charleston, February 11, 1796, illustrates the record in his Journal. He says: "O, my dear brother, how my soul pant-

eth, desireth, and prayeth for a revival of religion in Baltimore. I have desired all our leaders to strive to establish prayer-meetings through the whole town, and to cry mightily to God. What have our slumbering spirits been about? What! None convinced, converted, and sanctified! The devil has been around the fold and stolen some away. O, my brother, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for the sake of the Eternal Spirit, for the sake of believers, backsliders, mourners, and poor miserable sinners, let us awake and call and cry upon the walls of Zion. If my advice is generally received, the work will revive. If it is not taken, I shall call heaven and earth to witness against my dear Baltimore children and brethren. I have desired that my letters, which all speak one language, should be read in the leaders' meeting, and come like claps of thunder among you all."

The zeal of this great evangelist was not limited to Baltimore, or even to America; it compassed a world. In a letter written less than two years before he died, Bishop Asbury said: "O if the Methodists will walk by the same rules, in fifty years more British and Spanish America will be peopled with the gospel and saints! O the Bible Societies of Europe and America, spreading truth over all the world! O Africa!* O Asia! The isles of the sea! Come home, the seed of Abraham!" February 9, 1814, he wrote to Mr. Myles, of Baltimore: "I hope Dr. Coke will devote the last of his days nobly, not in making many books, but in his apostolic mission in those two vast quarters of the globe, Asia and Africa. My prayers and good wishes shall follow him and his missionaries." Less than a year before he died he wrote to the British Wesleyan Conference: "O, my brethren, to spread the printed and preached gospel, and to feed the rising generation with the

* It was fitting that the sons of Asbury at the Centennial General Conference of the Church he was chief in building should consecrate a Bishop for Africa. Bishop Taylor illustrates the zeal of Bishop Asbury.

sincere milk of the word! And O, that Europe, Africa, Asia, and the few millions of the scattered tribes of Abraham may hail and kiss the Son of David and the Son of God! Amen."

Asbury performed his work with great diligence. "I cannot," he says, "be idle, but must be occupied till my Lord shall come." Of rest on earth he seemed to scarcely think. The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper said of him: "Wonderful man! Every day and every hour, almost every minute, appeared to be employed and devoted in close application to some excellent work and useful purpose." Had he been less fond of toil than of repose, Methodism in America could not have attained to such vast proportions. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." Asbury's diligent hand shaped into greatness the goodly fabric of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Moving with amazing rapidity among the Churches and Conferences he, every-where, inspired others to activity. Mr. Snethen says of Bishop Asbury: "There was nothing in the world he so much dreaded as a preacher who was not always in motion." Thus this heroic captain of the cavalry of Methodism kept his soldiers mounted and in action. There was no resting on arms under his unfaltering leadership. With the whole Church and ministry in constant and rapid motion, under the mighty and invincible Asbury, the continent trembled beneath the rushing hosts.

The phenomenal success of Methodism in America has called forth opinions respecting the cause or causes of that success. So far as human agencies were concerned, undoubtedly a chief cause was the unflagging and powerful leadership of Francis Asbury.

How great was Asbury's diligence is shown in the following passage, written in 1799, more than sixteen years before he ceased his labors. He says: "I tremble and faint under my burden: having to ride about six thousand miles annually; to preach from three to five hundred

sermons a year; to write so many letters, and read many more; all this and more, besides the stationing of three hundred preachers; reading many hundred pages, and spending many hours in conversation by day and by night, with preachers and people of various characters, among whom are many distressing cases." He elsewhere says of his letters: "I suppose I must write nearly a thousand in a year."

A continent was not too large for his energy. Writing to Dr. Coke in 1797, he says: "If you are a man of large mind you will give up a few islands for a vast continent, not less than 1,400 miles in length and 1,000 miles in breadth. We have sixteen United States for ingress and egress rising, not like little settlements, but like large nations and kingdoms." Over this widely-extended territory Asbury traveled, while rough and muddy roads, rivers and floods, cold and snow, heat and tempests, had no effect to abate his glowing ardor. The Rev. Henry Boehm says, that in a storm Asbury would say, "Let us journey on; we are neither sugar nor salt; there is no danger of our melting." In a letter to Thomas Morrell, the apostolic hero says: "I have been traveling for months, through mountains and hills and frequent rains, at the rate of one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles a week, and sometimes, for two days together, forty-five miles in a day. I have spent about fifty pounds in five months to meet the wants of the preachers, wilderness expense, and expenses of three horses. A valuable young man, Brother Hill, is my helpmate. I am now going to Bath for about ten days for my rheumatic affections, that have been stronger this winter than ever, and pursued me through the summer. From Potomac I am to work my way through to Albany, another wilderness. The Lord is with us."* In 1801, in a letter to Coke, he said: "After a confinement of seven weeks in

* This letter is without date. Internal evidence shows that it must have been written not long after the General Conference of 1792.

Philadelphia, and the eating out of a principal sinew in my foot by caustics, it having been strained by excessive riding, I am in my work again. I am now beating up to the westward to attend the yearly Conference for that department in the cast end of Tennessee."

Mr. Boehm began service as Bishop Asbury's traveling companion in 1808. The author of these pages wrote from his lips the account of his first journey in that office. "My first tour with Bishop Asbury," he said, "was from a point between Baltimore and Fredericktown, Maryland, where Strawbridge built his first church; thence westward. We crossed the Alleghany Mountains on our way, and the ascent occupied thirty-nine hours. Having passed the mountains we made our way to Wheeling; thence through Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee; thence pursued a southerly course, visiting the Conferences in the Southern States. During the western part of this tour we visited the territory of Indiana, which was a vast wilderness. We traveled in it thirty-six miles, and saw in all that distance only six human habitations." At that time Asbury was sixty-three years of age. In that very year he wrote to Dr. Coke: "My eyes, my time, my powers fail. Think how many hours I must be upon horseback when I only ride three, or at most four, miles in an hour." On May 2, 1809, Asbury again wrote to Dr. Coke, saying: "I am sinking under the weight of labors and the infirmities of the sixty-fourth year of my life. Last year I had to travel on crutches several hundred miles. The face of the country is such I cannot use wheels without great trouble and expense. Yours is a very different country." Shortly after his election to the Superintendency, Bishop M'Kendree wrote: "I am favored but little with Father Asbury's company. As soon as one Conference is over we part, and go with all speed from one appointment to another, by different routes, to meet at the next Conference. The old soldier (Mr. Asbury) travels sometimes on horseback and

part of his time on crutches. He preaches standing, sitting, and on his knees, as the necessity of the case requires. He seems to be determined to labor more than any of us." *

In regard to crossing the Alleghanies, Asbury, in 1791, wrote to Dr. Coke: "I soar, indeed, but it is over the tops of the highest mountains we have, which may vie with the Alps. I creep sometimes upon my hands and knees up the slippery ascent." With respect to his travels he, in the same letter, says: "All the property I have gained is two old horses, the companions of my toil 6,000 if not 7,000 miles every year. When we have no ferry-boats they swim the rivers." One of the horses he rode; upon the other he fastened his baggage. It is said that "his baggage-horse would follow him anywhere."

In his constant travels Bishop Asbury encountered many dangers as well as much hardship; yet these had no effect to check his aggressive movements. Says Ezekiel Cooper: "No season, no weather stopped him. Through winter's cold and summer's heat he pressed on. He was often in the tempest and the storm; in rain, snow, and hail; in hunger, thirst, weariness, and afflictions. Sometimes with uncomfortable entertainment, with hard lodgings and unkind treatment." In a letter addressed to "Elder Colbert," but without date, Asbury says: "If I am to continue my labors I purpose, against the advice of my best friends, to pass through your lines to Fort Pitt next summer, on my way to the Kentucky Conference. I have no intention of preaching as I go, only on Sabbath days. I must ride, ride from Monday till Saturday night." † Mr. Boehm graphically describes the perils that beset the apostolic wanderer. He says: "We often rode at night over rough stony roads and stumps, where it was exceedingly dangerous; sometimes on the side of

* "Arminian Magazine," London, 1809.

† Autograph letter of Bishop Asbury, in possession of Miss E. M. Colbert. Fort Pitt is now Pittsburg.

a mountain near a river, under such circumstances that a few feet, or even a few inches, would have been sudden destruction; sometimes when it was so dark I had to go before to feel the way and lead the horse. Several times he was in danger by his horses running away, or by their sudden starting, then by the upsetting of his carriage. This happened several times and in dangerous places, and yet he was miraculously preserved. He was often in danger in crossing the rivers and streams, to say nothing of swimming horses, or crossing over on logs or trees where, if he fell off, he would be greatly injured, but particularly in crossing the ferries. He often crossed in 'old flats' and 'scows' and canoes, with horses and sometimes wagons. Many of these boats were old and leaky, and sometimes poorly manned; at other times unmanageable. When we remember that the Bishop crossed the highest mountains, the widest and most rapid rivers, at all seasons of the year, we can estimate the danger to which he was exposed." Asbury, in referring to a man who said "he put his life in his hand," says: "So have I, every time I have crossed the wilderness and mountains."

Bishop Asbury was in perils from Indians. Said Judge M'Lean: "In passing through the Indian country west of the Alleghany Mountains, he literally took his life in his hand. He often encamped in the wilderness where no one ventured to sleep except under the protection of a trustworthy sentinel. And it was no uncommon occurrence for the Indians to shoot and tomahawk travelers on the routes which he traveled." In 1793, when he was under an escort of armed men, in the wilderness beyond the Cumberland Mountains, the savages were in close pursuit. One of the company—the Rev. William Burke—says: "We immediately put whip to our horses, and descended to Camp Creek, about sunset, when we called a halt to consult on what was best to be done. On putting it to vote whether we should proceed on our jour-

ney, every one was for proceeding but one of the preachers, who said it would kill his horse to travel that night. The Bishop all this time was sitting on his horse in silence, and on the vote being taken, he reined up his steed, and said: 'Kill man, kill horse; kill horse first.' In a few minutes we made our arrangements for the night. The night being dark, and nothing but a narrow path, we appointed two to proceed in front, to lead the way and keep the path, and two as a rear-guard, to keep some distance behind and bring intelligence every half-hour, that we might know whether they were in pursuit of us, for we could not go faster than a walk. They reported that they were following us till near twelve o'clock. We were then on the Big Laurel River. We agreed to proceed, and alighted from our horses and continued on foot till day-break, when we arrived at the Hazel Patch, where we stopped and took some refreshment. We were mounted and on our journey by the rising of the sun. By this time we were all very much fatigued, and we yet had between forty and fifty miles before us. That night, about dark, we arrived at our good friend Willis Green's, having been on horseback nearly forty hours, and having traveled about one hundred and ten miles in that time. I perfectly recollect that at supper I handed my cup for a second cup of tea, and before it reached me I was fast asleep, and had to be waked up to receive it. The Bishop proceeded on next morning."

Asbury gave much attention to details in his work. He could grasp the immense; he also could, and did, attend to little things. He was a pastor as well as a Bishop, and the Republic was his parish. As drops fill the sea and atoms compose the earth, so a wise man sees that the vast is made up of the minute. Asbury well understood this truth. He labored accordingly. Therefore, he stopped in his journey to instruct a poor negro slave in divine things. Therefore, he met the classes, visited the sick,

ministered from house to house, scattered the Scriptures, distributed tracts, and cared for the children.

At one time he says: "In every house, tavern and private, I have prayed and talked. This is part of my mission." In 1795 he says: "Since I have been in Lynn I have visited Woodsend and Gravesend, met five classes, visited about one dozen families, talked to them personally about their souls, and prayed with them." In 1796 he once wrote: "I met three living classes, several among whom professed perfect love." And again: "I was much fatigued in meeting classes and visiting from house to house; but the Lord was present to bless, which gave me consolation." In 1813 he writes: "We are safe in Charleston, visiting Black Swamp and some families as we came along." Soon after he says: "In visiting six families I found but two that acknowledged God in his word and worship." Again: "I visited Sister Perry, the former wife of John King, one of the first Methodist preachers." Again in 1810: "I preached the funeral sermon of Mary Withy. She was awakened to a deep inquiry respecting the salvation of her soul while I officiated at her house in family prayer. This was in the year 1772, on my first journey to Maryland. She slept in Jesus." He visited the sick as well as comforted the bereaved. In 1812 he says: "Sister Lusby's lamp is nearly extinct; I visited and prayed with her."

Not only did Bishop Asbury care for the classes and visit the sick personally, but he stirred up the preachers to do likewise. In his Journal of December 15, 1796, he says: "I wrote to our brethren in the city stations not to neglect the sick an hour, nor an absentee from class one week. Indeed, we ought to be 'always abounding in the work of the Lord.'"

Thus this marvelous Bishop passed through the land, not as a mitered prelate, but as the servant of mankind. As he went he paused to labor with individual souls, and to

pray with and exhort families. He was ever scattering seed from which has grown many a harvest. In his visitations among the families, the sick and downcast, he sometimes met those who were the fruit of seed he sowed long before. At Northeast Maryland, in 1814, he says: "I visited Daniel Sheridan, a son of deep affliction in body, mind, and circumstances. He is one of my spiritual children, and has remained a disciple forty years. We prayed together, and God was with us of a truth." How he scattered the seed in by-places over the country the following glimpses of his labors at firesides show: "Our travels," he says in 1813, "have been through toil and crowds and storms. It is our business to read, exhort, and pray, wherever we stop." A few days later: "We were careful to leave our testimony and to pray with every family where we stopped." Again, soon after: "We were careful to pray with the families where we stopped, exhorting all professors to holiness." Again: "We put into a house at Great Bend, and stopped to dine. Here I lectured, sung, and prayed with the poor infidels in the house; some stared, some smiled, and some wept. The lady asked me to call again as I passed. 'Yes, madam, on condition you will do two things—read your Bible and betake yourself to prayer.'"

Bishop Asbury was very direct and frank, as well as affectionate, in his pastoral conversations. On one occasion he stopped at a house in which was a young lady who played upon a piano. He took the grandmother of the young lady by the hand and solemnly addressed her thus: "Your mother was one of the first-fruits of Methodism in Maryland. She lived and died in the faith, and is now in heaven. She was the first generation of Methodists. You are the second generation, and I hope you are striving to walk in the good old way. Your children here are the third generation, and they have departed from the simplicity of Methodism." Pointing to the young lady at the

piano he said, "that is the fourth generation, and she must be taught to play, and I expect that the fifth generation will be taught to dance." Then the Bishop sat down and wept.

Asbury gave much thought and attention to children. Near the end of the year 1780 he wrote in his Journal, at a certain place: "I proposed meeting the children when I came again. I appointed a place for them to sit, and desired the parents to send a note with each, letting me know the temper and those vices to which the child might be most subject." A few days later he records: "I gave an exhortation, took down the names of the children, and spoke to some of them. I desired the preachers to meet the children when they came along—an important but much neglected duty. To the shame of ministers be it spoken." In January, 1801, he wrote: "I feel deeply affected for the rising generation. Having resolved to catechise the children myself, I procured a Scripture Catechism, and began with Brother Horton's. To this duty I purpose to attend in every house where leisure and opportunity may permit." In 1806 he wrote: "A few young people are under the operations of grace here; among whom are the two children of George Pickering—my namesake, Asbury, aged about ten; and Maria, still younger." Near to the close of his life he wrote: "I remember the little children."

The venerable Boehm says Bishop Asbury was very fond of children. "They would run to meet him, and then receive his blessing. They gathered round his knees and listened to his conversation. He would sometimes place them upon his knee and teach them the following lesson:

> "Learn to read, and learn to pray;
> Learn to work, and learn to obey."

Then he would show the benefit of learning those lessons: 'Learn to read, to make you wise; learn to pray, to make

you good; learn to work, to get your living; learn to obey, that you may be obeyed.'

"One day we were approaching a house, and a little boy saw us coming. He ran in and said: 'Mother, I want my face washed, and a clean apron on; for Bishop Asbury is coming, and I am sure he will hug me up.' The Bishop loved to hug the children to his heart, which always beat with such pure affection toward them."

The Rev. Dr. Wightman, who was a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, says, that among his earliest recollections, "is a tolerably vivid impression of a venerable old man, shrunk and wrinkled, wearing knee-breeches and shoe-buckles, dressed in dark drab, whose face to a child's eye would have seemed stern, but for the gentleness of his voice and manner toward the little people. It was the custom of my honored and sainted mother, no doubt at the instance of the Bishop himself, to send her children to pay him a visit whenever he came to the city. The last one was made in company with my two younger brothers. The Bishop had some apples on the mantel-piece of the chamber where the little group of youngsters, the eldest only seven years old, were introduced. After a little religious talk suitable to our years and capacity, the venerable man put his hands on our heads, one after another, with a solemn prayer and blessing; and dismissed us, giving the largest apple to the smallest child, in a manner that left upon me a life-long impression." *

The fact that Bishop Asbury published a letter which he received from a little boy, suggests that he may have corresponded with the little ones. That letter is interesting for the light it sheds on Asbury's relations with children:

March 20, 1803.

"DEAR PAPA ASBURY: I take the opportunity to let you know that I am bound for heaven and glory; and in-

* "Biographical Sketches of Eminent Itinerant Ministers."

form you of the blessed treasure I have found since I saw you—that is, the love of God in my soul. Glory, glory to my blessed Jesus, that he gave me to see that I was a sinner, and that I now feel his love in my soul. . . . I should be very happy to see you this summer. We have happy times, my dear papa. . . . I hope you will excuse my liberty in writing, for I love you, and I want you to know how good the Lord is to poor unworthy me. Please to remember me in your prayers that I may be faithful unto the end.

"I remain your unworthy boy,

"John Talbutt." *

A well-known lady, now eighty-three years old—Mrs. Rev. Dr. John S. Porter, of New Jersey—has a very clear remembrance of Bishop Asbury kissing her in her father's house when she was a child. She remembers, too, the Bishop's "sweet face."

Asbury, as we have seen, was greatly interested in the education of the young, and he sought to establish schools for that purpose. In 1791 he wrote an appeal to the Church on the subject of Christian education. In it he said: "A real concern for the rising offspring has been very weighty on my mind for many years." In closing the appeal, he said: "We have small hopes of coming properly at the lambs of the flock till you have schools of your own founding and under your own direction. If what I have advised, with any improvements, shall be found acceptable, it will give rest and joy to my mind. I have served you almost twenty years. I can only say they are your children I want taught, and can assure you it is in my heart to live and die with and for both parents and children." †

* "Extracts of Letters Containing Some Account of the Work of God Since the Year 1800. Written by the Preachers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church to their Bishops." New York, 1805.

† "Methodist Quarterly," 1830, pp. 236, 237.

Bishop Asbury dreaded becoming useless. To do good was his absorbing ambition. In 1792 he wrote: "I have had some awful thoughts lest my lameness should grow upon me and render me useless." When age and infirmity were upon him he distributed tracts and Testaments. In the summer of 1810 he made this record: "People call me by my name as they pass me on the road, and I hand them a religious tract in German or English; or I call at the door for a glass of water and leave a little pamphlet.* How may I be useful? I am old and feeble and sick, and can do little." Again in 1815 he writes: "As a member of the Bible Society in Philadelphia I have distributed many hundreds of Testaments." Again, a little after, being in Ohio, he says: "We have given away many Testaments to the poor on our route hither, and they were in all cases received with thankfulness. We accompany our gifts with prayer and exhortation when opportunities offer." While thus distributing the Scriptures, "he exultingly said to a friend: 'If ever I sowed good seed in my life I am sure that I am sowing it now.'"

For more than thirty-one years succeeding his election to the Superintendency of the Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop Asbury went through the nation, sowing beside all waters. His holy example, wise words, faithful and tender appeals by the way-side and the fireside, together with his administrative labors, his prayers, and his sermons, were a benediction upon the land. His influence was vastly more diffused among, and yet more effectively concentrated upon, the people than that of any statesman or president. He was a living and mighty spiritual power in the country, and he was so felt from Maine to Georgia. He was by far the greatest moral force in the United States for a genera-

*On "Historical Day" at Ocean Grove, August 12, 1884, the Rev. Dr. Charles H. Whitecar exhibited a small book or tractate, of perhaps 100 pages or less, which Bishop Asbury presented to his father, Benjamin Whitecar, in the year 1814.

tion. The country owes quite as much to him for his spiritual leadership as it owes to Washington for his military achievements. When independence was won by the sword of Washington, Asbury was at hand to bear the Cross over the Republic, and by it to transform neglected deserts into gardens of moral fruitfulness and beauty. He was a great pioneer evangelist, by whose agency the Gospel was preached and churches reared in new and sparsely-settled territory, as well as in the populous districts of the Union.

For this work "he used his influence with those who were able to supply his lack of means. He obtained donations in one part of the country where plenty abounded, and conveyed them to other parts that were deficient. Such supplies have frequently been conveyed hundreds of miles and distributed among the needy preachers to enable them to go on in spreading the word of life among those who were not able, or those who for want of grace were not willing, to support the ministry of the Gospel. Thus the mountains, the wilderness, and the remote settlements were visited. The praises of God were heard in the log houses covered with slabs or bark; and the poor, wretched inhabitants of miserable huts and forlorn cottages were brought to be subjects of converting and sanctifying grace. Asbury had his whole heart and soul set upon this work, and upon raising the means to carry it on. This was particularly manifested in what he called *The Mite Subscription* which he had always with him and presented it to those who were able and willing to contribute their mite (none were to subscribe more than one dollar) for the purpose of spreading the Gospel throughout the land." *

The evangelical labors of Asbury were probably without example. "It has been asserted by one of the ex-Presidents of the Wesleyan Conference—and the admission is remarkable coming from that quarter—that Bishop Asbury was in labors more abundant than Wesley himself. I see

* The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper on Asbury.

no reason to question the accuracy of Dr. Bangs's estimate, which is, that Asbury, during the forty-five years of his ministry in this country, delivered not less than sixteen thousand four hundred and twenty-five sermons, besides lectures and exhortations innumerable; that he traveled during the same time about two hundred and seventy thousand miles, for the most part on the worst of roads, and on horseback; that he sat in not less than two hundred and twenty-four Annual Conferences; and ordained more than four thousand ministers. This is a series of great labors, to which I doubt if the whole history of Christianity, for eighteen centuries, can find a parallel. He found five hundred Methodists in the country when he began his ministerial labors; at his death he left a flourishing Church in all parts of the land, with more than two hundred and eleven thousand communicants, and served by upward of seven hundred traveling, besides three thousand local, preachers." *

Bishop Asbury was invited by the British Wesleyan Conference to visit England. He, on the fifth of April, 1813, wrote a reply. He said: "A few days ago I received your generous invitation; and I feel a grateful sense of the obligation which you lay me under by the honor and unmerited respect which you have paid to my wishes. These were, and still are, that I may see you as a body of ministers, witness your order, the steadfastness of your faith in Christ, and your zeal to spread the Gospel throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and the isles of the sea. I had hoped to sail in May, accompanied by two young men in the ministry, and to land in June on my native shore; and, after spending about three months in England, return to America. In this affair we have not used lightness; that would ill become a man in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and fifty-third of his ministry. I shall look forward, in hope, to the years 1814, 1815; it may be thought

* Dr. Wightman, in "Biographical Sketches."

a forlorn hope, considering that I am bound to attempt, in the unevennesses of this continent, and in all the inclement changes, to ride five thousand miles in eight months, to meet ten Conferences, as one of the Superintendents; and that in addition to all this, being subject to a periodical lameness every year, I have to be handed into congregations, houses, ferry-boats, etc.

"When I wrote to my friends, Coke and Roberts, to inform them of my intention to visit the spot which gave me birth, I fondly hoped that our General Conference would see their way open to elect one or two Superintendents; but in this I was disappointed. If the proposed visit be paid, it will be in mutual love, for the purpose of spiritual edification."

In April, 1815, less than a year before his death, Asbury again addressed a letter to the British Conference, in which he said: "We have received your last letter, in which you expressed a readiness to receive us, could we visit you, according to our former wishes and intimations, and we hope, that in obedience to the will of God, if fully manifested to us, we shall be ready, not only to change countries, but worlds. But your aged friend, having been more or less asthmatic for about sixty years, feeble in his limbs, but abundantly weaker in his lungs, is in a great measure unfitted for public service, and even for social intercourse." Thus he appears to have been literally "worn out."

Having contemplated Asbury's qualifications for his great mission in America, and the way he fulfilled that mission, let us now take a fuller view of him in the pulpit.

As it respects his presence, he is thus described by the Rev. Thomas Scott: "He was now about forty-four years of age, and about five feet eight inches in height. His bones were large, but not his muscles. His voice was deep-toned, sonorous, and clear. His articulation and emphasis were very distinct. His features were distinctly marked, and his intellectual organs were well balanced

and finely developed. His hair and complexion when he was young were light, and his eye-lashes uncommonly long. No one could look upon his countenance without feeling that he was in the presence of a great man. His very look inspired awe, veneration, and respect. His general appearance was that of a person born to rule."* The Rev. Francis M'Cormick, also a contemporary of Asbury, in the last century, says: "There was evidently something apostolic in Mr. Asbury. From my first hearing him in Virginia I was always charmed with him, and heard him as often as possible."

Asbury was an earnest preacher. He was in all respects a thoroughly earnest man. When he entered the pulpit his single object was to do good. Upon that object he poured his whole being. Not to entertain them or to win their applause did he go before his congregations, but to show them the way of salvation, and to persuade them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. Hence he spared not himself nor his hearers. "Could I be less earnest when I preach," he writes, "I might have less bodily suffering; but it may not be."

"The love of Christ [did him] constrain,
To seek the wandering souls of men;
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,
And snatch them from a gaping grave."

The preaching of Asbury was with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. In September, 1813, he preached at West Union, Ohio. "I was turned into another man," says he. "The Spirit of God came powerfully upon me, and there was a deep feeling among the people." Sixteen years previously he preached to a full house, and says: "I was uncommonly assisted in preaching, and there was much weeping in the congregation."

Again in 1813 he says: "I preached in the tabernacle

* Bennett's "Methodism in Virginia."

on 2 Cor. v, 11. If the people say it was like thunder and lightning I shall not be surprised. I spoke in power from God, and there was a general and deep feeling in the congregation. Thine, O Lord, be all the glory!" In the fall of 1815, only a few months before death hushed his voice, of an occasion on which he preached, he says: "We had a feeling time. I spoke awful words." Of a sermon he preached some years before, he said: "I think my words pierced the hearts of some like a sword." The Rev. Henry Smith mentions a sermon the Bishop preached in Baltimore. He says: "Shortly after the new church was opened in Eutaw Street I heard Bishop Asbury preach a plain, close sermon in said church. I think it was the first time he preached in that church. His text was, 'Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.' The discourse was plain and powerful. He expressed a fear that the Baltimoreans were departing from the simplicity of the Gospel. He reproved them in the spirit of a father, and raised his voice and cried aloud, 'Come back! come back! come back!' raising his voice higher at every repetition. His looks are still imprinted on my mind, and the solemn words, 'Come back, come back, come back,' still seem to sound in my ears."

Dr. Bangs describes a scene in the same church while Asbury was preaching during the General Conference of 1808. "Having delivered a severe reproof to those parents who indulge their children in worldly frivolities, he suddenly paused, and said, 'But you will say, this is hard. Alas,' he added, letting his voice fall from a commanding and majestic tone to one that was barely audible, 'it is harder to be damned.' These words, uttered in a manner that showed the deepest emotion, fell upon his audience, wrought up as they were by what had immediately preceded, with prodigious power, and sobs and groans were almost instantly heard throughout the house. The venerable Otterbein, of noble and dignified

bearing, who was sitting in the pulpit, was turned into a child. The tears flowed down his face like a river."

The Rev. James Quinn describes a camp-meeting occasion in 1810, in which Asbury was a chief figure. "The Bishop," says Quinn, "had a heavy day's journey in reaching the place. He was weary and hungry; but, after a good night's rest, he appeared in the encampment next morning—the Lord's Day—comfortably refreshed and in good spirits. And O, with what holy fervor did he preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, while listening thousands felt that the Lord of hosts was with him. O, day of days, not to be forgotten." The Rev. Henry Boehm says: "I remember one very impressive scene under his preaching in Union Church, Philadelphia. The congregation was large and was moved to its extremities by intense excitement of a most hallowed character. It was an occasion long to be remembered." Thus it is seen that through his years of vigor, and down to old age, the word of Asbury was with power.

His sermons were adapted to instruct and edify rather than to excite his congregation. He probably appealed more to the understanding than to the emotions. Says the Rev. Thomas Scott, who heard him often: "His sermons resembled the lessons of an intellectual parent giving instruction to the children he tenderly loved." The late reverend and venerable Henry Boehm assured the author of these pages that a great unction accompanied Asbury's preaching. Mr. Boehm also characterized him as an evangelical preacher. He preached God's word, and fed the flock of Christ.

That his preaching was accompanied with unction would be supposed from his close intimacy with God in prayer. A man who prayed as did Asbury must have carried to the pulpit the aroma of the closet. Toward the close of his life he, in a letter, said: "I believe I have spent a seventh, if not a sixth, of forty years in vocal and mental

prayer." So his word was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

No man, probably, heard Bishop Asbury preach as often as the Rev. Henry Boehm. "I have heard him," he says, "over fifteen hundred times. His sermons were scripturally rich. He was a good expounder of the word of God, giving the meaning of the writer, the mind of the Spirit. He was wise in his selection of texts. There was a rich variety in his sermons; no tedious sameness, no repeating old, stale truths. He could be a son of thunder or of consolation. He was great at camp-meetings, on funeral occasions, and at ordinations. I have heard him preach fifty ordination sermons, and they were the most impressive I have ever heard.

"In preaching, he, like the fathers, depended much on the divine influence. He knew it was not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. He once took hold of the arm of the Rev. Samuel Thomas when he rose in the pulpit to preach, and whispered to him, 'Feel for the power, feel for the power, brother.' He often felt for the power himself, and when he obtained it, he was a kind of moral Samson."*

It is evident that Asbury was accustomed to so preach as to fasten the truth in the hearts of his hearers. Of this the fruitfulness of his ministry is a proof. The Rev. Thomas Smith, in April, 1802, says: "I met Bishop Asbury at Drummondtown, where he preached to an overflowing congregation, who seemed to hear as if it were the last message of Jesus Christ to which they were listening." The Rev. William Colbert, July 3, 1793, speaks of hearing Asbury, and says: "The discourse was made a blessing to me." July 21, 1796, he says: "Began our quarterly-meeting in Milford. Bishop Asbury preached much to the purpose." His arrows were well aimed.

Like most extemporaneous speakers, Asbury was not

* Boehm's Reminiscences.

always equally fluent in thought and expression. In 1774, when he was under thirty, he says: "It seems strange, that sometimes, after much premeditation and devotion, I cannot express my thoughts with readiness and perspicuity; whereas at other times, proper passages of Scripture and apt expressions occur without care or much thought. Surely this is of the Lord, to convince us that it is not by power, nor by might, but by his Spirit, the work must be done. Nevertheless, it is doubtless our duty to give ourselves to prayer and meditation, at the same time depending entirely upon the grace of God, as if we had made no preparation."

It is probable that no candid and unprejudiced observer of Francis Asbury, in the last forty years of his life, ever pronounced him to be a weak man, intellectually or morally. His character rose into grandeur. His intellect, acute, solid, massive, powerful, was every-where recognized and felt. His preaching, the product of such a character and mind, and throbbing with spiritual feeling, was a power in the Church and in the land. Greatness was visible in his countenance and mien. Dr. Coke, on his first interview with him, says: "I exceedingly reverence Mr. Asbury. He has so much simplicity, like a little child; so much wisdom and consideration; so much meekness and love; and under all this, though hardly to be perceived, so much command and authority, that he is exactly qualified for a primitive Bishop." * Thomas Ware reports Coke as saying: "In the presence of Brother Asbury I feel myself a child. He is, in my estimation, the most apostolic man I ever saw, except Mr. Wesley." Dr. Coke, in his Journal in 1787, says: "Mr. Asbury, who is assuredly a great man of God, has treated me with much respect."

John Kingston, a Wesleyan preacher, who was in the United States in 1794, says: "I again met with the venerable Mr. Asbury. His conversation was animating and

* Coke's Journal, "Arminian Magazine," (American,) vol. i, p. 244.

profitable, and I enjoyed the greatest satisfaction in his company. His sound judgment, exemplary piety, and indefatigable labors in the ministry, render him a great blessing both to the preachers and people in the United States." * The Rev. Joshua Marsden, also an English Wesleyan preacher, who was detained in New York in consequence of the last war with England, in a letter dated January 8, 1814, and published in the "Arminian Magazine" of that year, says: "Mr. Asbury is nearly worn down by age, labors, and infirmities; yet the good old veteran seems determined to die in the work. His memory, his voice, and his talents for preaching and presiding seem very little diminished. His hair is as white as snow, and the venerable furrows on his aged face strongly remind one of the simplicity and gravity of a primitive Bishop."

All who came near to Asbury seem to have realized his greatness. The Rev. Nicholas Snethen, who traveled with him in the first years of the present century, and who, except Mr. Boehm, probably had the best opportunities of knowing him, appreciated the grandeur of the American Bishop. Snethen was a very able man, and did not agree with him altogether with respect to ecclesiastical polity; but he says, Mr. Asbury "was my father, and we agreed to disagree." Snethen says: "Mr. Asbury's moral courage was equal to his industry." He speaks of "the vast ability with which this great man" fulfilled his office, and also speaks of "the mighty energies of his mind." He says: "Above all, pre-eminent, as a star of the first magnitude, shone Francis Asbury. In him were concentrated the directing mind and the animating soul necessary to direct and move the whole body. There was one point in which this chief man in our Israel challenges universal admiration, and that was the impulse he gave to experimental and practical religion. It is impossible for the most able of his admirers to convey to those who knew

* London "Arminian Magazine," 1799, p. 264.

not the man and his communication, any adequate conception of his virtue-inspiring influence over the minds of the preachers."

The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, who was a leader in the days of Asbury, and who knew the Bishop long and well, says: "In almost every circle where he moved he gained a kind of irresistible ascendency, like a father in his family, and a ruler in Israel. We well know what influence his presence had, what weight his words carried, and with what decision his opinion would settle the doubtful question. It was almost impossible to approach and converse with him, without feeling the strong influence of his spirit and presence. There was something in this remarkable fact, almost inexplicable and indescribable. It appeared as though the very atmosphere in which he moved gave unusual sensations of diffidence and restraint to the boldest and most undaunted confidence of man. 'Take him all and in all, his like we shall never see again.' Another Francis Asbury, another like him, we shall neither have nor know again."* Mr. Cooper also said: "I have had a particular and intimate knowledge of Francis Asbury and the manner of his life. We have had a confidential intercourse, an intimate friendship, and union of heart. I am confidently persuaded, take him all and in all, that no man in America ever came up to his standard."

Still earlier fathers of the Church spoke in strong terms of Asbury's extraordinary character. The first native itinerant, William Watters, said of him: "A greater charge than the love of power has been brought against Mr. Asbury, though I believe only by a few, even that of the love of money. I think a devil ought to blush, if it were possible, at such a charge. Where is all that he has been heaping up for near these forty years? I confess if this were his object, he has stood so high in the estimation

* Cooper's "Funeral Sermon on Asbury," pp. 25, 26.

of many that he might have accumulated considerably by this time. But is it so? Where is it? I have been as long and as intimately acquainted with him as most men in America, and I must give this testimony: Of all men that I have known he is, in my estimation, the clearest of the love of money, and the most free to give away his all in every sense of the word." * The Rev. John Dickins said of Asbury in 1798: "I have frequently settled his book of private accounts, in which I have always found that he has charged himself with the donations of his friends, or whatever money he has received, and credited himself with nothing but twenty-four pounds a year, and his traveling expenses. At the close of the year the balance has been carried to the proper side of a new account for another year. When he left this city last he had not money enough to bear his expenses for one month. I shall conclude with adding that, from my long and intimate acquaintance with him, I think I never knew a man so disinterested as Mr. Asbury." † Mr. Dickins further testified of his excellence: "Mr. Asbury does not bear a character like many others, so superficial as not to admit of examination beneath its surface, but like fine gold, the more it is scrutinized the more its intrinsic worth appears. Therefore they who have most thoroughly investigated his character, both as a Christian and a minister, admire it most." ‡

Mr. Dickins died of yellow fever in Philadelphia in 1798. After Bishop Asbury's mother died he contributed to the support of the widow of his friend. Says Henry Boehm: "He not only supported Mrs. Dickins while he lived, but left provision in his will that she be paid eighty dollars a year till her death. This sum I paid her annually, as his executor, till she died." Respecting Bishop Asbury's generosity, Ezekiel Cooper says: "Of gold and

* Life of Watters.

† "Methodist Magazine," Philadelphia, 1798.

‡ Quoted by Emory in "Defense of Our Fathers."

silver he had but little at any time, nor any other property; and therefore from want of pecuniary means he could not distribute abundantly of the good things of this life; but of such as he had of temporal things he was always ready to communicate. If he had two garments of one kind, and saw a poor brother in need, would he not cheerfully give him one? And would he not readily divide the contents of his scanty purse with a brother who was destitute?"

The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson thus spoke of this wonderful hero: "Francis Asbury has gone from his hard toil, and reposes with the blessed in Abraham's bosom. He was often afflicted, especially when far advanced in life, and frequently traveled and labored when he could scarcely put one foot before the other. A more indefatigable preacher I never knew. Few men have a greater knowledge of human nature than he had. My intimacy with him was of about forty years' standing, and I can truly say that his deportment called for respect wherever he went. He was, I believe, perfectly free from the love of the world. The powers of his mind were strong." *

Several of Bishop Asbury's traveling companions have borne emphatic testimony to the transcendent excellence of his character. The Rev. Daniel Hitt was one of them, and in a letter to Dr. Clarke, of England, he said: "I have had a long and intimate acquaintance with Mr. Asbury, and think for sincere piety he has been exceeded but by few; for plainness of dress and simplicity of manners he was almost proverbial; and for zeal, perseverance, and endurance of sufferings, I doubt whether he was equaled by any man now living."

All who enjoyed an intimacy with the venerable and saintly Boehm, the celebrated centenarian and the last survivor of the traveling companions of Asbury, knew with what af-

* Garrettson's Semi-Centennial Sermon. 1826.

fectionate reverence he cherished the memory of the great Bishop. He says: "For five years I not only traveled with the venerable Asbury, but slept with him. When he was quite ill I would wrap myself in my blanket and lie down on the floor beside the bed and watch till I heard him call 'Henry,' and then I would rise and minister to his wants. Being so feeble he needed a great deal of attention. Many times have I taken him from his horse and carried him in my arms into private houses and meeting-houses, where he would sit down and expound the word of life to the astonishment of those who heard him. I also carried him from the houses and placed him upon his horse. He often preached sitting down, not so much in imitation of his Lord, as because he could not stand up.

"Bishop Asbury possessed more deadness to the world, more of a self-sacrificing spirit, more of the spirit of prayer, of Christian enterprise, of labor, and of benevolence, than any other man I ever knew. He was the most unselfish being I was ever acquainted with. Bishop Whatcoat I loved, Bishop M'Kendree I admired, Bishop Asbury I venerated."

It was Asbury's felicity to live long enough to see the Church he founded firmly established in the land. He found the Methodists in America a feeble and a "little flock." In a letter to Coke, September 2, 1811, he says: "When I came hither, in 1771, we had five hundred in society, who were more nominal than real members."* In a letter to the Rev. Stith Mead, of January 16, 1813, he said: "Serious times with me, an old soldier of Jesus. I handle my crutch and say how fields were won. In the sixty-eighth year of my age, fifty-second year of my ministry, forty-second year of my American mission, I have lived to see two hundred thousand in Methodist fellowship, three thousand local laborers, seven hundred traveling laborers. We have established the ninth, and appointed the tenth, Conference

* "Methodist Magazine." London, 1812, p. 316.

on Mississippi,* a complete circuit for the President around the United States lines five thousand miles, and meet ten Conferences in twelve months." Had Bishop Asbury died at the age of fifty it is impossible to tell what would have been the fortunes of the young Church. It is doubtful whether any other man could have maintained its unity and system, especially the itinerancy, with the Bishop's appointing power, during those critical years. There was no General Conference for almost seven years after the Christmas Conference, and until 1796 the ecclesiastical organization of American Methodism was but imperfectly accomplished. Asbury, by his influence, wisdom, and authority, maintained the order and stability of the Church until its polity was definitively shaped by the General Conference.

The preachers came into the work during his superintendency, and they developed under his eye. By his example, his spirit, and his instructions, he shaped their ministerial character. They esteemed him as a father, and such they called him. His personal influence was so potent that he could ever rally his standard-bearers to his side. They were ready always to march under his orders. As the ranks thinned by death and location he gathered recruits for the itinerancy. Says one of his contemporaries: "At the age of seventy Mr. Asbury could scarcely recognize half a dozen of the primitive American preachers in the Conferences. Poverty and location had anticipated death." He, however, was able to maintain the numerical *status* of the ministry by "a succession of young men."

He was, therefore, in close sympathy with the young men. He gave them consideration. He was alert to espy

* This Conference Bishop Asbury never reached, though he aimed to do so. The Rev. Daniel Hitt says that, in a letter written from Kentucky, only about six months before the death of Asbury, the writer said concerning the Bishop: "I find he contemplates a visit to Natchez, on the Mississippi, a journey of some hundreds of miles through an uninhabited country."

promising candidates for the pulpit. At one time he says: "Met with Henry Jones, a serious young man, and believe he is called to the work of the ministry. I advised him to go with me." One who observed his administration says: "One of the points in which we used to differ from Mr. Asbury was his aptness to employ young men. It was matter of wonder to us how so old a man could manifest so great a predilection for the young." Herein he was wise. The work was always extending. The older preachers, who did not fall by death, were ever retiring from stress of poverty or failure of health. Except young men were brought forward, the work must languish and the great aggressive campaigns of the Church must end. Besides, the triumphs of early Methodism were won chiefly by young men. Asbury understood this: "The young preachers for action, and action for success." So with heart and hand he took hold upon young men.

Bishop Asbury's manner of treating young men is shown by a passage in the history of the Rev. Thomas Smith, who joined the itinerancy in 1798: "The Rev. Jesse Lee," says Mr. Smith, "gave me an introduction to the Bishop. He asked me if I were the young man who went out from Chestertown, after the last Conference in Philadelphia; whether the work of God prospered where I had traveled, and many other questions, which I answered as well as I could. He gave me much counsel, and closed by saying, 'Thomas, be faithful to God; be faithful to his Church; be faithful to yourself.' When he dismissed me, 'A thousand blessings on his soul,' thought I, 'for his good advice.'"

One of the most beautiful spirits of the early American itinerancy was Caleb B. Pedicord, the father in God of the Rev. Thomas Ware. How Asbury thrust Pedicord forth into the itinerant field, the latter briefly describes in a letter to Ware: "When Asbury pressed me to become an itinerant," says Pedicord, "I said, 'God had called me to

preach, and woe be unto me if I preach not,' but I had not conviction that he had called me to itinerate. 'No conviction, my son,' said he to me sternly, 'that you should follow the directions of Him who commissioned you to preach? Has the charge given to the disciples, "Go and evangelize the world," been revoked? Is the world evangelized?' He said no more. I looked at the world; it was not evangelized."

Pedicord mounted his horse, and went forth to bear a part in the great work of the world's evangelization, in which enterprise he toiled, triumphed, and died. Thus did Asbury discover and press into the service of the Church devoted and gifted young men.

His treatment of young preachers is illustrated by a scene in the life of the Rev. Joseph Travis. Mr. Travis says: "When my name was called in Conference, and the usual question asked, if there was any thing against me, my Presiding Elder answered, 'Nothing against him.' I was in the act of walking out, and got nearly to the door, when Bishop Asbury remarked, 'I have something against Brother Travis.' I turned round to ascertain what it was. He said that he understood I had been studying Greek this year. I pleaded guilty to the charge, but remarked that in so doing I viewed myself as treading in the footsteps of some of our most worthy and excellent brethren. He made a few remarks on the danger of preachers neglecting the more important part of their work, namely, the salvation of souls, for the mere attainment of human science. He then bade me retire. The next day, meeting with me by myself, he took me in his arms and gave me an affectionate hug, requesting me not 'to think hard of his remarks the day before; that he merely designed whipping others over my shoulders.' I took it all in good part, for I always did truly love and esteem Bishop Asbury." *

* "Autobiography of the Rev. Joseph Travis, M.A."

Before closing this analysis of the character of Asbury, let us briefly view him in his filial relation. He was a son, and what a son! In a letter to his father and mother he says: "I last evening made an arrangement for a remittance to you by my agent, John Dickins, with Mr. Suckley, the young man that made you a visit last year. This sum will come into your hands in three or four months. My salary is fourteen pounds ten shillings sterling. I have sold my watch and library, and would sell my shirts before you should want. I have made a reserve for you. I spend very little on myself. My friends find me some clothing. I might have money, but the wicked world and those that leave our Connection strive to blacken my character, by saying I have the profits of books at my command, and profits from the college and the schools established in many parts of America. These reports I am able to refute, and yet they say, 'He remits money to his parents every year.' The contents of a small saddle-bag will do for me, and one coat in the year. I am well satisfied the Lord saw fit that you should be my parents rather than the king and queen. I sometimes think you will outlive me. I have made my will and left my all to you, and that's soon done. While I live I shall remember you every year—perhaps come to see you if you live many years."

When Asbury was fifty years old he wrote his parents: "I am like Joseph—I want to have you near me. I am not ashamed of your poverty. When I think you have no child nor friend that careth for you, I want to have you near me. It is true, while I live you will live also, if I keep my place and piety."

From Baltimore, October 30, 1795, he wrote them: "I have delivered into the hands of my agent the supply for the present year. By a late letter I am informed that it will soon be transmitted to you. Were it ten thousand per year, if I had it in my possession, you should be welcome if you had need of it. No person could have been

in more difficulty of circumstances than myself. It is wickedly reported of me that I collect money from the printing concern and college, and send it home to my friends in large sums. This is done by wicked men I have prevented from oppressing and robbing the Church of God. I hope you use carefully what I dearly purchase by riding six or seven thousand miles a year, besides sitting in and conducting Conferences of two hundred preachers, and the charge of many things for the cause of Christ. The coat and waistcoat I now have on I have worn thirteen months, and I would not carry a second shirt if I could do without it. But all these things are but trifles. . . . Think not that any thing comes grudgingly from me. Could you eat wedges of gold, if I had them, you should be welcome to them."

Again, July 29, 1796, he writes to "My very dear and never-to-be-forgotten parents:" "I sincerely wish I could come to you, but I see no way without sinning against God and the Church. Hard wear and hard fare. But I am healthy, and lean, gray-headed and dim-sighted. I hope I enjoy as much of religion, or more than ever—preaching, living, feeling. You know how long I served the Church for nothing. I might have money, but I am set for the defense of the Gospel."

The following year he again wrote his parents, saying: "How will it be when I am gone to rest! Next to leaving the Church, I feel for you. If I should leave America I should break my heart; and if I stay perhaps I shall break my constitution. But here I must die! May you find a safe passage from England, and I from America, to glory! I have settled with Dr. Coke for the ten pounds. If the doctor should offer you money, you may take it. I shall use every prudential means to pay him."

To his mother he wrote: "O my mother, let us be holy, and watch and pray that we may meet in heaven. You have professed religion fifty years, living, feeling religion. A

mother you ought to be in Israel. Your numerous friends will hear and listen when you die, to know if your last days were peace and triumph. Were you to see me and the color of my hair—nearly that of your own. But still God is with me. My soul exults in God!"

In 1801 Bishop Asbury wrote to his friend Morrell: "I am clear with Mr. Wesley, 'that the obligation of children to parents ceaseth but with life.' My dear mother is going swiftly, if not gone, after praying fifty-five years for me. I have often thought very seriously of my leaving my mother, as one of the most doubtful sacrifices I have made."

Bishop Payne, in his "Life of Bishop M'Kendree," says he heard the Rev. Thomas L. Douglass say that he was much impressed by the remark of Asbury, that "he expected to live to be an old man, because the divine promise to those who honor their father and mother applied to him." Bishop Payne adds that the evidence was before him [Payne] that Bishop Asbury "was in the habit of remitting annually to his widowed mother while she lived, all he could possibly spare."

The Rev. Henry Boehm, who wandered with Asbury a hundred thousand miles, says: "He used frequently to mention his mother, and as he did so the tear would fill his blue eye."

It is well known that he never married. This, however, was not because he did not honor womanhood. "Next to Mr. Wesley," says Thomas Ware, "Bishop Asbury was the most unwearied itinerant the world ever saw. No man I ever knew cherished a higher Christian regard for the female character than he; yet for the sake of the itinerancy he chose a single life."

After almost forty-five years of herculean labor for God in America, such as probably was never performed by any other man since Jesus ascended to heaven, this great prince and leader of American Methodism came to the end of his hardships and his toils. On Sabbath, the 24th of March,

1816, he, being in Richmond, Va., insisted upon speaking to the people. His traveling companion, the Rev. John W. Bond, fearing the consequence, sought to dissuade him, but he replied, "God had given him a work to do there, and he must deliver his testimony." At the time appointed he was carried into the meeting-house. He sat in the pulpit upon a table, and preached his last sermon from the text, "For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." He preached for almost an hour, and when he ceased, he was nearly exhausted. The next Sabbath the celestial gates were to open for him, and he was to enter the Jerusalem of gold.

From Richmond he traveled northward until Friday, when he reached the residence of George Arnold. With that family he had been acquainted for nearly forty years, and their house had long been a Methodist preacher's home. On Saturday it rained, and he did not proceed. On Sabbath he was very feeble. He at one time inquired the hour of the day, and on being told that it was nearly eleven o'clock, he said, 'Is it not time for meeting?" He was informed that none were present but the family. He then said, "Call them together; I want to have meeting."

When they were gathered Mr. Bond read the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, which contains the wonderful description of the New Jerusalem. During the meeting "he appeared much elevated, and raised his hands frequently in token of triumph." Soon after his voice failed, but, says Mr. Bond, "he gave evidence that he possessed his reason till the last. A little before he died, finding that I was affected at his not being able to take a little barley-water which I offered to him in a tea-spoon, he lifted up his hand toward heaven in token that he should soon be there. I then asked him if he found that Jesus was present, when he raised both his hands toward heaven with an

expression I shall never forget. He then, without a groan or complaint, fell asleep in the arms of his Saviour, at four o'clock on Sunday, the 31st of March, 1816." Thus ascended one of the purest, noblest, most useful souls that ever entered heaven.

Asbury needs no marble, no epitaph, to commemorate his character, services, and achievements. Of him it may be said, in the American Republic anywhere, as is expressed in the legend over the dust of Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's: "Would you see his monument? Look around." That monument is the American Methodist Church.

In writing of his departure, one who had been his traveling companion, the Rev. Daniel Hitt, said: "In many respects, in a religious point of view, I am persuaded that he has not left his equal upon earth." * On the day that Bishop Asbury died, Mr. Bond wrote to Mr. Hitt these tender, beautiful words: "Our dear father has left us, and gone to the Church triumphant. He died as he lived, full of confidence, full of love."

* Letter of Daniel Hitt, in the "Lamp of Life," the Rev. J. S. Smart, D.D., editor, May, 1884. The original letter is in the possession of Mrs. Lydia Miller, Homer, Michigan.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOHN DICKINS, THE FOUNDER OF THE BOOK CONCERN.

JOHN DICKINS was a foremost minister, not only of Methodism, but of America. In natural and gracious endowments, in mental acquisitions, and in devotion to his sacred calling, he was excelled by few. He was among the chief workmen who laid the massive and enduring foundations of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Mr. Dickins was born and educated in the city of London. He came to America before the Revolution. Here he was converted about the year 1774, and soon after began his public religious labors.

We find him toiling as an evangelist with glorious success in Virginia in the summer of 1776. "On June the 9th," he says, "we had a large congregation. I spoke on 'No man can serve two masters.' Several appeared to be much distressed, two women in particular. We spent above an hour in prayer for them, and they arose in peace. When we met the class, we suffered all that desired to stay. The leader only put a question or two to each member. This was scarce ended when the fire of God's love was kindled. Praises hung on the lips of many, and many cried out, 'What must we do to be saved?' Thus it swiftly went on; every now and then one rising with faith in Jesus. Surely this was one of the days of heaven."

On Sunday, June 16, 1776, Dickins preached to an audience which he believed numbered four or five hundred. His text was, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." He says: "This was a day of

Pentecost. Conviction seized on numbers who wrestled with God till their souls were set at liberty. A young woman told me 'she heard many people fell down, and she would come to help them up.' This she said in scorn. She came accordingly. The power of God soon seized her, and she wanted helping up herself. It was not long before He helped her by giving her faith in Christ. We believe twenty souls found peace this day. O may we see many such days!"

Soon Dickins witnessed another powerful manifestation of grace in connection with his labors. He says: "July 7 I spoke to a large congregation. Afterward I was going to give out a hymn, when one was so powerfully struck that he could not hold a joint still, and roared aloud for mercy. I immediately went to prayer, the cries of the people meantime greatly increasing. After prayer Benjamin Tyus, late a great opposer, jumped up and began to praise God, with a countenance so altered that those who beheld him were filled with astonishment. Our meeting continued from twelve at noon to twelve at night, during which God raised up about fifteen more witnesses."

On the 21st of July, 1776, he beheld "the power of the Lord" once more in "a large and attentive auditory." "The next day," he says, "I was much tempted to doubt whether I was sent of God to preach or not. I prayed earnestly to the Lord that he would satisfy me, and that he would keep all false fire from among us. Afterward I preached. While I was speaking, a mother and her daughter were so struck that they trembled in every joint. But before I concluded both found peace. Glory be to God!"

These passages show the zeal and power which Dickins displayed in the beginning of his ministry.

The year following the events above related, namely, in 1777, Dickins was admitted on trial, and appointed with three others, one of whom was Le Roy Cole, to North

Carolina. Only thirty-five preachers, besides himself, were appointed at the Conference when Mr. Dickins joined. He may, therefore, be considered one of the earliest as well as one of the ablest evangelists that Methodism gave to the country. During the Revolution he labored in different portions of Virginia and North Carolina.

At the Conference of 1781 his name is entered among those "who desist from traveling." Why he desisted is, perhaps, indicated by the remark of Asbury, June 19, 1780: "Brother Dickins spoke on charity very sensibly, but his voice is gone."

On the fifth of April, 1783, Asbury, in North Carolina, wrote: "This day I prevailed with Brother Dickins to go to New York, where I expect him to be far more useful than in his present station." Dickins was soon at his work, for June 24, 1783, there is a record in the old John Street book which shows his presence: "To cash to Mr. Dickins, £5 12." The Rev. J. B. Wakeley, in his "Lost Chapters," says: "In the spring of 1784 Mr. Dickins was re-appointed to New York. The record on the 'old book' is very full, and his name occurs scores of times. They paid Mr. Dickins ten pounds a quarter salary, and so many pounds for provisions. All the other preachers had been single men. Mr. Dickins was the first man of family stationed in Wesley Chapel, his the first minister's family that resided in the parsonage."

On the third of November of this year Dr. Coke landed at New York, where he disclosed to Dickins the purpose of his visit. Mr. Wakeley says: "December 8, 1784, is the following entry in the 'old book': 'To cash paid Brother Dickins for expenses to Conference, six pounds.' This was, no doubt, the Christmas Conference, at Baltimore, which assembled sixteen days subsequently.

Mr. Dickins remained in New York two years. In 1786 he returned to the city, and stayed three years. Thus of the six years, from 1783 to 1789, he spent five in

the metropolis. The transfer of so able a leader from North Carolina to New York after the war closed, and his retention for so long a period at that important post, shows the sagacity of Asbury. The Minutes omit New York in the statistical reports of 1783, consequently the size of the membership when Dickins entered upon his pastorate there is unknown. In the following year, 1784, however, New York reported only sixty members. Dickins, no doubt, found the society very feeble after the tumult and distractions of the Revolution. Under his hand the work progressed, and when he finally removed from the city, in 1789, he left a membership of three hundred and sixty. The following year New York Methodism enjoyed a glorious revival, for which the wise and zealous administration of Dickins was, no doubt, a grand preparation. The membership was thereby so increased that at the close of the year it numbered six hundred and twenty-four. John Dickins was one of the chief instruments in rehabilitating Methodism in New York after the war, and in laying well and securely the foundations of the newly organized Church in that great commercial emporium.

In 1789 he removed to Philadelphia, where he remained until his death, a period of over nine years. There he fulfilled his ministry in one of the chief pastorates of the Church. There, also, he began the work which gave him his chief distinction. He was the Book Steward of the denomination. In that office he founded the Methodist Book Concern, and by his learning, skill, fidelity, and industry he brought it in nine years from nothing to a degree of prominence and efficiency which made it not only an enduring monument of his genius, but an incalculable power for good in the world.

When Dickins began his work as Book Steward the publications which the young Church needed were not considered sufficiently merchantable to induce the publishers to issue them. It was important, however, that the

powerful aid of the press should be brought to the support of the rising Church. Accordingly, Dickins took the responsibility of publishing a Methodist Hymn Book. In 1789 the Conference agreed to assume the publication, and, at its request, he consented to become Book Steward. The "Arminian Magazine" was issued for that and the succeeding year from Philadelphia by Mr. Dickins.

The first number of that periodical opened with a sketch of Arminius, which was followed by an article on the Synod of Dort. Then came a sermon by Mr. Wesley on 1 Tim. vi, 9, after which two hymns were inserted. The title of the first hymn is, "Salvation Depends not on Absolute Decrees;" and that of the second, "Universal Redemption." Then followed two religious poems, which concluded the fifty pages of the number. This number also contained a prefatory address "To the subscribers for the Arminian Magazine" signed by Coke and Asbury, which occupied nearly four pages in italics. The address is dated North Carolina, April 10, 1789, and appears in the January number of the same year. This shows that the magazine did not appear until some time subsequent to the month of its date. To the publication of Coke's Journal in that magazine we are indebted for much that we know of the Christmas Conference. That edition of the doctor's Journal which sheds so much light on that momentous period of American Methodist history escaped the notice of the earlier historians of the denomination, except Lee, and he makes no mention of it, though it is probable that he was indebted to it for a few of his facts.* Lednum seems to have consulted it, though he does not mention it in his "Rise of Methodism."

When two volumes of the "Arminian Magazine" were completed, Dickins suspended it. Either because the

* I have elsewhere said that the volume of Coke's Journal, published in London in 1793, gives no intimation of important facts which are found in his Journal in Dickins's magazine of 1789.

returns were not adequate to justify its continuance, or for other reasons, its publication ceased. Had it lived, its successive volumes would have been an immense and invaluable treasury of facts and documents illustrative of the work and the heroes of the Church. In 1797 another periodical was published by order of the General Conference of 1796, with the title of "The Methodist Magazine." It bore the following imprint: "Sold by John Dickins, No. 50 North Second Street, Philadelphia, and by the Methodist ministers and preachers throughout the United States." It contains a note "To the Reader," dated Philadelphia, December 17, 1796, which was, no doubt, written by Dickins. It is as follows: "The General Conference of the ministers and preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, assembled at Baltimore, in November, 1796, directed the publication of this magazine, and agreed to use its influence in promoting the circulation thereof; and in this laudable design the two following considerations must have great weight:

"1. Religious knowledge as well as innocent and instructive entertainment will by this means be extensively communicated; and as it will be conducted on a plan of general usefulness, it may be beneficial to Christians of all denominations. Our desire is to be useful to all.

"2. The profits of this work, as well as the profits of all our other publications, will, so far as is declared and explained in the Minutes of the aforesaid Conference, be cast into the Chartered Fund, which is now on foot, for the support of the traveling ministry.

"It is intended that this magazine should be continued in monthly numbers, so long as sufficient encouragement is given, to promote hereby the utility which we contemplate and hope.

"We can only say, further, that it shall be our great concern and diligent endeavor to make the whole as useful and pleasing as possible."

This magazine was published until the death of Dickins. Had he lived it is probable that his skill and energy would have maintained it, and in that case the Church would have been the richer. Dickins died in September, 1798, and for months thereafter the publishing department of the Church was without a head, no doubt much to its detriment. The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, who succeeded Dickins as Editor and Book Steward, terminated the existence of the magazine when the volume for 1798 was completed. There remain four volumes of the magazines published within something over a decade after the oganization of the Church.* Those volumes are monumental of the faith, the intelligence, and the energy of the infant Church. Their contents afford demonstration that some of the early American itinerants were men of grand intellect and considerable culture; men fit to stand among the great leaders of their time.

They were, indeed, great men, and as such they wrought and achieved. To do the work which the early itinerants accomplished in the midst of the scorn of the wicked, the prejudices of even the righteous, and the contempt of the proud and the ignorant, stalwart workmen were necessary. The great and wonderful religious system known as Methodism was not shaped by pigmies, but by giants. The men who, in the face of mountainous difficulties and with slender human resources, founded and built with such amazing wisdom, firmness, and strength the Methodist Church in this land, proved their greatness by their work. As the evidence of the genius of Michael Angelo is the temple of St. Peter, so the proof of the superlative power of the primitive preachers of American Methodism is their marvelous and enduring achievement. Among those great men Dickins was a foremost leader.

* It is my privilege to have at this writing all of those volumes in my possession in a perfect condition, save that a part of the table of contents is missing from the volume of 1798.

Mr. Dickins loaned the publishing interest a small sum of money, and proceeded with the business. His first publications, besides the Magazine and the Hymn Book, were Thomas à Kempis, "Primitive Physic," and "The Saint's Rest." In 1797 a Book Committee was constituted to aid, by its counsel and co-operation, the Agent in his work.

Mr. Dickins conducted the editing and publishing enterprise in a manner which won the highest commendation. The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, who knew him intimately, says: "The whole of his actions, public or private, appeared to be bent upon the glory of God, the honor and promotion of religion, the good of man, and the punctual discharge of those duties which become a good and faithful servant. Trace him through his temporal business in which he was employed in the world, and we see conscientious rectitude in all his dealings. Find him where you would, employed in whatever business, you discover in him a man professing and practicing religion; not to be thwarted by any consideration from the regular discharge of his duties. I do not believe I ever knew a man to excel him in conscientious rectitude and genuine piety." *

Dickins attended personally to all the details of the publishing business. Every thing passed under his watchful eye and skillful hand. Says Mr. Cooper: "He superintended the printing, binding, and distribution of the various and numerous publications which we for years past have been sending out into the world. During the four years last past he has had published for the Connection about one hundred and fourteen thousand books and pamphlets, in which he contracted with the different departments—such as paper-makers, printers, binders, etc.—besides correcting for the press, circulating the books, keep-

* "A funeral discourse on the death of that eminent man, the late Rev. John Dickins. By the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper." Philadelphia, 1799, pp. 17, 18.

ing the accounts, and minutely attending to the whole superintendency of this extensive work. This department he filled with fidelity and diligence as a good and faithful steward." *

Falling suddenly in the midst of his labors, Mr. Dickins left the Book Concern well established, but in a condition of orphanage. No one was found to man the post which his lamented death left vacant. Bishop Asbury appointed the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper to the position, but he declined to serve. Finally, in June, 1799, the larger part of a year after Mr. Dickins's departure, Cooper was selected by the Conference, and was induced to accept, though reluctantly, the superintendency of the orphaned publishing establishment.

Soon after entering upon his duties Mr. Cooper addressed the following statement

"*To the Preachers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church:*

"After the death of that eminent man, the late Rev. John Dickins, our former Editor and General Book Steward, our book business was at a stand-still for about eight months. Consequently, the latter numbers of our Magazine for 1798 have not appeared till long after the time intended for them to have been published. Our friends and subscribers will readily excuse this long delay when they are informed that, under existing circumstances, it was unavoidable.

"Soon after the death of our worthy friend, John Dickins, Bishop Asbury appointed me to the place of Editor and General Book Steward for the Connection; but for various reasons I then did not accept the appointment; and, indeed, being aware of the many and great difficulties of the station, I did not intend to accept it at all. As there was no other appointed, the business could not go on.

"In the month of June last, Bishop Asbury and the Philadelphia Conference unanimously—except my own

* Cooper's funeral discourse on Dickins, p. 21.

dissenting vote and one other—made choice of me to conduct the business. They prevailed with me to accept the place, but I consented with considerable reluctance. My yielding was principally in compliance with the wishes of my brethren, and a desire that the work might go on; which, if promoted, may answer an excellent purpose to the Connection.

"As so much time has passed before the later numbers of the Magazine for 1798 could appear, and for other reasons, it is thought advisable to suspend the publication of a volume for 1799, especially as half the year is already past. Probably at a future period it will go on again, and, we hope, to the satisfaction and benefit of many.

"We purpose going on with other publications, and advise our brethren to be spirited and diligent in promoting the circulation and sale of our books. It is well understood that our Book Concern is intended for the benefit of the whole Connection, and particularly designed to spread religious knowledge among mankind. The profits arising from the business are to be applied to religious purposes, and principally as an auxiliary to our brethren in spreading the Gospel. For this purpose the General Conference resolved that, after the debts are paid and a sufficient capital be established to carry on the business, the profits of the Book Concern shall be united with the Chartered Fund and be appropriated to the support of the ministry, to our worn-out and superannuated preachers, and to the widows and orphans of those who have been spent in the ministry. How should we strive together to promote a business which has for its objects such important ends?

"An Agent can do but little without the mutual endeavors of preachers and members in buying, selling, and circulating the books and making remittances. It is my opinion that if our brethren be but spirited and industrious in this business it will answer a great and valuable purpose to the Connection, to the cause of religion, and to the

good of souls. O, brethren, help! Do what you can. Send for books and strive to spread religious knowledge abroad. You may do a great deal of good, and this is what you wish to do."

This appeal is dated Philadelphia, July 29, 1799, and was published in the "Methodist Magazine" for the year 1798, the issue of the last numbers of which is thereby shown to have been considerably subsequent to the date affixed to them.

The condition in which Mr. Cooper found the affairs of the Book Concern when he undertook its management he has elsewhere set forth. His report to the General Conference of 1808 shows approximately how the establishment stood when Mr. Dickins died. The fact that so long an interval occurred between the event of his death and the succession of Cooper probably caused some shrinking in the assets of the institution.

Mr. Cooper says: "When I engaged in this Concern, in the spring of 1799, the whole amount of clear capital stock, including debts and all manner of property, was not more than four thousand dollars." When Mr. Dickins began the business, a little more than nine years before his death, there were but forty-three thousand members and one hundred and ninety-six preachers in the Church. He launched the enterprise without any capital save that which was borrowed. He had to travel an unexplored way as he advanced. The business was created under serious disabilities and by slow and laborious processes. Without much experience in the work, Dickins probably took risks which proved pecuniarily unfortunate at the time, but which may have been the seed of profits which his successor reaped. That Dickins's administration was bold as well as wise, is shown by the publication of a monthly magazine of very respectable size while the Church was feeble in both numbers and resources. That periodical was, no doubt, valuable to the ministry as well as to the

membership, even though it may not have been a profitable venture from a business point of view. Its value, as a repository of historical data ninety-five years after its publication, the present volume attests.

The four thousand dollars of clear capital which Mr. Cooper found when he succeeded to the agency was but a small part of the fruit of Dickins's enterprise. A Book Concern had been established and was in successful operation. The one hundred and fourteen thousand copies of books and pamphlets which had been put in circulation during the last four years alone of its founder's life had probably reached a half million or more of readers. Those publications had furnished moral stimulus and religious inspiration to preachers and to people. They had explained the doctrines and methods of the new Church, and vindicated it against the criticisms and aspersions of its foes. They had been silent but potential aids to the ministry in their evangelical labors, and they had nourished the intellectual as well as the spiritual life of the denomination. The work achieved by John Dickins in giving a literature to American Methodism rendered him a benefactor of mankind. Some of the books he published are still extant, and are now read, eighty-six years after his death.*

When Ezekiel Cooper took charge of the Book Concern, in 1799, there were over sixty-one thousand members and two hundred and seventy-two preachers. The Church was just entering upon a period of very rapid growth. For the multitudes that were so soon to throng its altars, Dickins had prepared the means of instruction and edification by the printed page. The Book Concern, however, yet required much devotion, skill, and energy to foster it and

* Four of Dickins's publications, in perfect preservation, are now in my possession, besides the Magazines. They are: 1. The Manners of the Ancient Christians, extracted from a French Author by John Wesley; 2. Letters Written by Jane Cooper; 3. A Defense of Methodism; 4. Nicodemus; or, A Treatise on the Fall of Man, Written in German by Augustus Herman Franck: Translated by John Wesley, M.A. They all bear the date of 1795.

to make real its grand possibilities. Cooper proved the man for the exigence.

When he began he says: "I had not a single dollar of cash in hand belonging to the Connection to carry on the work, or to procure materials, or to pay a single demand against the Concern, which at that time was near three thousand dollars in debt. Under these circumstances, and thus situated, I engaged in the business with reluctance, fear, and trembling. I maintained and established the credit of the Concern by my own personal responsibility for contracts made, and the credit I had in the confidence of those for whom I did business. Thus, with cautious steps and prudent forethought, I had to struggle and go on by night and day; and had, in certain cases, to advance my own cash to meet some of the demands against the Concern. In the course of the first year I got the business tolerably well under way; and, by intense application and great fatigue, got released from some embarrassments and perplexities, and the business appeared in a state of liberal prosperity.

"At the General Conference of 1804 the Concern had so far prospered that I could show a capital of about twenty-seven thousand dollars, which was clearing for the Connection about twenty-three thousand dollars in five years from a capital of four thousand, which was, when I received it, in a precarious and scattered situation, and during which time of five years I had no help allowed me by the Connection further than a small consideration of three hundred dollars and my board per year.

"In 1804 the General Conference appointed Brother John Wilson to assist in the business, since which time we have progressed upon the capital of about twenty-seven thousand dollars till this time, and now we show a capital of about forty-five thousand dollars. So that, since the time I first engaged in the business, in 1799, being nine years, the capital stock has increased about elevenfold,

which is more than a hundred per cent. per annum, or about eleven hundred per cent. in nine years, upon the original capital and stock of about four thousand dollars, besides the various appropriations to the Conference and other purposes, as our ledger and day-book will show."

When, in 1808, Mr. Cooper retired from the Book Concern, the Church had reached a membership exceeding one hundred and fifty thousand, and the preachers numbered five hundred and forty. This was an increase during his period of service of ninety thousand members and two hundred and sixty-eight preachers. The field for the business was, therefore, vastly greater in the nine years of his administration, than it was during the nine years of Dickins's stewardship. From Cooper's statements it appears that in nineteen years from the origination of the enterprise by Dickins, notwithstanding nearly a year was lost after his death by the failure to secure an Agent, it grew from nothing to the possession of a capital of forty-five thousand dollars, which is evidence of a great work accomplished in the dissemination of a quickening and wholesome Christian literature over the land.

In 1804 the Book Concern was removed from Philadelphia to New York. In the General Conference of that year, Baltimore and New York were competitors for the Concern, and the latter was chosen as the place of its future location by a majority of only two votes. It was established in one small room in Gold Street, New York, and Mr. Cooper, in addition to performing the duties of his agency, served the society in Brooklyn as pastor. In 1808 the Rev. John Wilson, who was Mr. Cooper's assistant the previous quadrennium, was elected Agent, and his assistant was Daniel Hitt. That year the business was removed to a small house in Pearl Street, in which Mr. Wilson also had his residence. He died in 1810. From 1810 to 1812 the business of editing, publishing, selling, and packing was done in one room on the corner of Church and White

Streets, under the superintendency of Mr. Hitt. Thence the Concern was removed to John Street, where it occupied two lower rooms. After some time, there was another removal to Chatham Square, where also two rooms were occupied. During the sojourn in Chatham Square, in 1821, the Agents, Nathan Bangs and Thomas Mason, opened a bindery in the basement of the Wesleyan Academy buildings, 14 Crosby Street. This was thought to be a bold venture by many, but it was successful. In 1824 a printing-office was opened, and the business was once more removed—this time to Fulton Street. In 1825 the academy buildings were purchased, and the business was chiefly conducted there until October, 1833, when it entered upon the occupancy of the new buildings, erected expressly for its use, on lots purchased in Mulberry Street.

An editorial writer in the Christian Advocate and Journal of October 11, 1833, says of the Concern, that "the wisdom indeed was divine which planned it; the devotion of its friends, who have at all times rallied around it, is praiseworthy; the integrity and ability with which it has been conducted by those who have had the direct management of its affairs can scarcely be appreciated, particularly when they have been at all times without personal pecuniary profit, and sometimes with pecuniary sacrifice. The frequent and marked manifestations of the divine favor must inspire confidence in all.

"The divine goodness has enabled it to find a permanent home in suitable buildings erected for its accommodation. The main building has a front of 121 feet on Mulberry Street, and is 47 feet wide. Including the cellar, which is paved with stone, it is seven stories high. It is five stories above the basement, which is a proper story and fully occupied. In this basement are many fire-proof vaults for the preservation of stereotype plates. There is a back building, 48 by 52 feet, the floors of which corre-

spread with and open to the floors of the front one, except that it has no cellar.

"The whole building is most substantial, the walls of stone and brick. The roof of the front building is tin, that of the back one is slate. Hundreds of industrious individuals find employment here. It would move any heart with a pleasant emotion to look into the stitching and folding room and see scores of neat, modest females busily at work. It is encouraging to the hopes of religion to see the thousands of volumes and innumerable pages scattered through all parts of the country, carrying the streams of the water of life. It creates a strong, chastened, and elevated gratitude to know that all of its pecuniary avails are distributed annually to comfort and cheer the hearts of the 'worn out preachers, their wives, widows, and orphans.'"

Such were the extended proportions to which the publishing institution had grown in forty-four years, after Mr. Dickins laid its foundation stone. The manner in which he began the work is told by Freeborn Garrettson, who says Dickins "commenced our Book Concern by printing one small hymn book, and that he printed principally with his own funds. The Book Concern, which he managed with integrity and dignity, before his death acquired a considerable degree of magnitude." *

The publishing as well as the educational enterprise of the Church was destined to be tried by fire. In a little over two years after the buildings above described were completed, they were consumed. So extensive was the conflagration in New York when they were destroyed—in the early part of 1836—that the insurance companies were largely crushed, and consequently but little insurance was realized. The Church, however, came to the rescue, and the Concern rose with vigor from the flames.

Mr. Dickins not only possessed a capacity for affairs, but also scholarship, of which he laid the foundation in his

* Garrettson's Semi-Centennial Sermon.

youth. He was beyond doubt the finest scholar of the Church in his day. His mental acquisitions were such as to entitle him to rank with the learned men of America. Dr. Coke said that Dickins was "eminent for both piety and learning." "By application to study," says Mr. Cooper, "he made great progress in various learning. He was considerably versed in classical education, especially in the Latin and Greek languages. He made but little proficiency in the Hebrew, but sufficient to enable him to read the Hebrew Bible. He was an acknowledged linguist. His knowledge of his native tongue was great; I believe therein he was capable of putting criticism at defiance. Those who knew his skill in all its parts of grammar and speech, will readily agree with me that he had a complete knowledge of the English language.

"He had acquired a very considerable knowledge of moral and natural philosophy. The study of nature and morality was a pleasing employment to him. Various agreeable and instructive conversations have I had with him upon these subjects. His mathematical knowledge was extensive. He was allowed to have a complete understanding of all the various branches of that science; and he was particularly delighted with algebra. He was well acquainted with geography, history, and chronology; also with logic, rhetoric, and poetry, and made himself somewhat acquainted with astronomy. In each of these branches of learning he had acquired so much knowledge that we may truly say he was a learned man. Had he possessed a disposition to obtain worldly fame, and had he brought forward his knowledge and talents to public view in a popular manner, he might have cut a distinguished figure among the men of this world, and his name have been spread and recorded among the *literati*. But his remarkable humility, and inclination to be little and unknown, together with a determination to use what knowledge he had to the glory of God and the religious

benefit of man, prevented him from being generally known in his literary character. In the use and exercise of all his gifts and talents he acted as a good and faithful servant in the cause of his Lord.

"As to his knowledge of divinity, there were but few in any place who had more correct ideas of the Gospel system. His knowledge of theology was such, that he might well deserve to have been called a doctor of divinity. He was orthodox and evangelical. He was well acquainted with the various polemical questions, and capable of managing them in a masterly manner; yet he carefully avoided the field of controversy relative to certain systems non-essential to the true interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. However, he was a true defender of the faith in the fundamental doctrines of Christ."

In natural endowments Mr. Dickins ranked with the remarkable men of his time. "It would appear," says Cooper, "that he was formed by Providence for a great man, capable of high improvement in the various affairs of life. His mental powers were clear and strong. He was endowed with an extraordinary understanding. But few men could reason closer or more conclusively on almost any subject. His conclusions from given premises were equally just and accurate, and consequently his judgment was highly valued by those who knew him. He possessed a just sensibility, fine feelings, and accurate ideas of the true dignity of man."

In the pulpit Dickins excelled. "There his expositions were clear and scriptural. When he opened a text, it was like opening a cabinet of jewels to your view; he would show you a rich treasure in the Scripture. His method and manner were pleasing. Very few had a more agreeable and pleasing way of opening a subject to the satisfaction of his hearers. His arguments were strong and convincing; his improvements were remarkably instructive, and his applications equally searching. Although he was

instructive to the understanding, and pleasing in his method, his grand object was to examine the hearts of his hearers and to 'search Jerusalem with candles.' In his application he would say, almost as pointedly as Nathan did to David, 'Thou art the man.' He was a wise master-builder; a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson corroborates this analysis of Dickins's pulpit abilities by the statement that "he was a great and a useful preacher."†

At the General Conference of 1796 William Colbert heard him exhort. He says: "Dr. Coke preached a delightful sermon from Philippians iv, 4, and John Dickins gave us a beautiful exhortation. After the service one of the preachers broke out into an ecstasy of joy, which affected many. It was a time of a gracious shower. For my own part I was tendered." Dr. Coke said of Dickins: "As a preacher, he is remarkable for the solidity of his sermons and for the great variety of his matter."

He was a faithful minister. "The souls of men," says Cooper, "he constantly sought. When among the careless about religion, he sought to convince and stir them up to seek the Lord. When with mourners he was rich in communicating comfort, by pressing the promises and pointing to Christ. When with the tempted and tried, he administered suitable relief and consolation. When with believers who were panting for more religion or purer hearts, he would take them by the hand and help them forward in their spiritual progress. He would take all in every situation whom he could prevail with and lead them to Christ, and build them up in faith and holiness."

Thus it is apparent that Mr. Dickins was a devoted Christian. Like Asbury and other of the early Methodist preachers, he was a man of prayer. "He always rose early,

* The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper's Sermon on Dickins.

† Garrettson's Semi-Centennial Sermon.

when health permitted, and spent an hour or two in prayer, reading the Bible, and in meditation before he engaged in any business with men or worldly concerns; and through the day he frequently and regularly retired to his closet for prayer. I never knew him to come home to his regular meals, but that he retired to seek refreshment for his soul in secret devotion.

"Who among us is left to excel—may I not say, who to equal—him as a man of piety? His Christian experience was clear. He, in his early convictions, drank the wormwood and the gall. He fled to the atonement for acceptance, and there he found pardon for his sins. He witnessed by his life that he was a child of God. He was possessed, in an eminent degree, of the graces of the Holy Spirit. The principal object with him was holiness. He considered holiness vastly more necessary than happiness. From his conversion until his death this was the mark toward which he pressed, and which he attained. His humility, patience, meekness, brotherly-kindness, faith, and charity were remarkable. In whatever company he was found, instruction and profitable conversation flowed from his lips. His words were seasoned with grace. Though he might be religiously cheerful, yet a Christian gravity and seriousness always attended him. His delight was to honor his Lord by improving every time and opportunity of doing good. The more you knew him, the more you were convinced that he was a faithful servant of God. There are too many who from slight acquaintance you take to be pious characters, but upon a more intimate acquaintance you find them to be of a contrary disposition—base metal—mere counterfeits in religion. Not so with our departed brother. He was as pure gold that would bear the touch-stone. He would bear the most critical and thorough investigation throughout his life. To know him was enough.

"My own personal acquaintance with him has been con-

siderably long and intimate. I have been with him in various circles, public and private. I have had many opportunities of reviewing his deportment in the world, in his family, in the Church, in temporal and spiritual concerns, and of discovering his moral rectitude as it related to the principles of his heart, in the designs of his mind, in life and conduct; and I can conscientiously say I believe him to have been one of the *best of men.*

"Often have I found him to be a remarkably profitable associate in the fraternal bonds of the Gospel and in the unity of the spirit of peace. Some of my most happy hours have been spent in his company, and I can say it was good for me to be with him. His human, literary, or scientific knowledge, of which he possessed a great deal, I never could perceive puffed him up in the least. He possessed it as though he possessed it not. But upon all suitable occasions he would discover and exercise himself as a man of profound wisdom and knowledge. With emotions of pleasure and sorrow I retrospect, and think upon the various improving and satisfactory times I have had with him, and am ready to ask, Where shall I find another equally profitable both in scientific and religious improvement? Were it necessary, how many testimonies could be produced in confirmation of the worth and excellence of the late great and good, the wise and useful Dickins." *

Mr. Dickins was an influential ecclesiastical leader. "He was," says Mr. Cooper, "zealous to maintain good order and regular government; and he was opposed to every thing that had a tendency to open a door to any innovation upon the doctrines, the order, or the discipline of the Church. He may be considered as one who was set for the defense of the Gospel. He always studied the true interests of the Church. We have often experienced the benefit of his attention to these objects, not only in his connection with the individual societies or churches

* The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper on Dickins.

where he has been placed, but also in Conference, among the ministers, upon the weighty concerns of the general Connection. There his judgment was generally consulted and highly valued. We have long experienced the benefit of his services in various Conferences, and consequently his loss is and will be sensibly felt by the Connection at large."

Dickins was a hero. Philadelphia was scourged by three epidemics of yellow fever. Instead of fleeing from danger he remained, as a faithful pastor, at his post. Mr. Cooper says: "He sought to be a friend to all and to administer comfort and benefit to man, especially in times of affliction and distress. This has been frequently manifested, but especially during the prevailing fevers of 1793, 1797, and 1798. How did he then search out the haunts of distress and affliction? Never avoiding any scene of danger where duty called to administer to the necessities of the afflicted and wretched till the dire disease cut him down and stopped his progress. His liberal hand was always open to supply the wants of the poor, so far as his ability extended. But few had any idea of the extent of his charities."

A short time before he was prostrated by the fever, Mr. Dickins, in a letter to Bishop Asbury, said: "I sit down to write as in the jaws of death. Whether Providence may permit me to see your face again in time I know not. But if not, I hope, through abundant mercy, we shall meet in the presence of God. I am an unprofitable servant; but I think my heart condemns me not, and, therefore, I have confidence toward God. So I commit myself and family into the hands of God for life or death."

The closing scene of this eminent minister is well described by Mr. Cooper, who says: "When he was first taken sick he sent for his wife, and told her he was very ill and begged her to be resigned; and to tell the children that it was his particular request that they also should be resigned; for, said he, 'I am perfectly resigned, and can rejoice in the will

of God ;' and with tears running down his cheeks, and hands clasped in ecstasy, he cried out, 'I have not been so happy for seven years.' A friend told me that a little time before his death he heard him in prayer, when alone, utter these words: 'O Lord, thou knowest me. Thou knowest it has been my desire to do thy will in all things!' This was his language to his heavenly Father while alone, but he was heard by the friend who told me, who was in an adjoining apartment. His remarkable resignation to Providence was further evidenced. When himself and his eldest daughter were both extremely ill, and another of the children taken in the same dangerous situation, he again recommended the partner of his bosom to be resigned to the divine will. 'The Lord,' said he, 'will do all things well.' When the news was brought to him of the death of his eldest daughter, a fair and hopeful flower in the family who had just arrived to woman's age, he said, 'Is she gone? "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."'

"Being asked by a friend a little before his exit, 'My dear brother, don't you see the towers of the New Jerusalem appear?' he requested him to repeat the words again, which was done. He then answered: 'Yes, I do.' The same friend asked him if they should pray. He answered by a request that they should *praise*. When his speech was nearly gone he was observed, by the friend who attended him, to be in fervent praise and prayer; and although but few of his words could be articulated, he was heard distinctly to say, 'Glory, glory! Come, Lord Jesus,' These were his last words that could be understood." *

* The Rev. Jesse Lee made the following record, October 3, 1798, in his Journal: "We heard of the death of Brother John Dickins and his daughter. They both died the week before. I have not felt so much distressed at hearing of the death of any person for a long time. In the death of Brother Dickins we have lost one of the best of Christians, a good preacher, a worthy and much respected man, and an uncommonly faithful superintendent of the Book Concern. He died of the yellow fever in Philadelphia,

The first subscription for a Methodist school, after the pattern of Kingswood, in England, was drawn by Dickins in 1780. Asbury says: "Brother Dickins drew the subscription for a Kingswood school. This was what came out a college in the subscription printed by Dr. Coke." June 19, 1780, Asbury says: "I hope John Dickins will ever after this be a friend to me and Methodism." His desire was realized, for in June, 1799, the Bishop wrote to his mother: "My dear friend in America, John Dickins, died with the fever, but I am spared a little longer."

Asbury and Dickins were closely united. Mr. Cooper says: "Those two men were like unto Jonathan and David of old. They were one in heart, mind, and mutual affection."

We have seen that, according to Mr. Ware's recollection, Mr. Dickins proposed, in the Christmas Conference, the name that was given to the new ecclesiastical organization. The name which he in that body first pronounced—"the Methodist Episcopal Church"—has since been on millions of tongues, and will probably continue to be pronounced by myriads throughout the world, until the militant Church shall be united with the Church triumphant. As a friend of Asbury, and the first itinerant to welcome Dr. Coke to this country, and, like them, an Englishman, he would inevitably have prominence in shaping the affairs of the young Church, especially as his capacity for leadership was large, and his standing in the Connection, perhaps, second to no other. He seems to have been to Asbury, in the formative days of the Church, somewhat as Hamilton was to Washington in the infancy of the Republic. How skillfully and successfully he maintained, in the General Conference of 1792, the Bishop's prerogative to station the preachers, we shall see hereafter. Probably the most im-

which is stated to be much worse at this time than at any former period. The accounts published in the newspapers state that from sixty to eighty die of a day, and one day upward of one hundred died."

portant work performed by Dickins was the founding of the Methodist Book Concern. He was the father and pioneer of the editing and publishing work of American Methodism; and Asbury's sagacity is seen in his selection of Dickins for the great task of laying the foundation of a denominational literature.

The portraiture which Ezekiel Cooper has given of Dickins seems almost colored by devoted friendship, yet Cooper declares that "it would be difficult to pass too high an encomium upon him." The great excellence of the man could be justly set forth only in words of eulogy. "Bishop Asbury," says Mr. Cooper, "who was probably longer and better acquainted with him than any other man, styles him *his faithful brother*, and in a note upon his death says: 'Such was his probity and piety that according to his time and opportunity he was one of the greatest characters that ever graced the pulpit, or adorned the society of ministers or Methodists. On his tomb might be engraved, or over his sleeping ashes might with truth be pronounced, Here lieth he who in the cause of God never feared nor flattered man.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW CHURCH IN NEW ENGLAND.

METHODISM did not formally invade the land of the Puritans until the year 1789. Before that time casual incursions had been made there by Methodist preachers, but no societies had been formed. The first Wesleyan itinerant who, so far as any record shows, preached in New England, was William Black. He visited this country in the fall of 1784 for the purpose of obtaining laborers for Nova Scotia, and, as we have seen, attended the Christmas Conference. From Boston, where he preached twice, he proceeded to New York by the way of Rhode Island. From New York he went to Long Island, and accompanied Philip Cox to some of his appointments. Thence he crossed the Sound into Connecticut. Of his visit there Black says: "I preached in the evening at North Walk, and the next morning rode on to Stratfield. I preached six or seven times among the people here, and then returned to New York." *

The seeds of Methodism were thus planted by a stranger's hand in New England on the eve of the ecclesiastical organization of the denomination; for Black says: "During my absence from New York Dr. Coke had arrived there, and two other preachers from England, and were gone on toward Baltimore. Therefore on November 17th I set off for Philadelphia, and thence forward on my way to meet them." †

The seed Mr. Black sowed in Connecticut was not altogether fruitless. Years afterward, when Jesse Lee visited

* Black's Journal, "Arminian Magazine." London, 1791, p. 411.

† Ibid.

a certain neighborhood in that State, he found that Black had prepared the way for him; for he says in his Journal: "Mr. Black, one of our preachers, had been there a few years before, and some of the people had been wishing for the Methodists ever since. They spread the news as much as they could, and at seven o'clock the people met and I preached to an attentive congregation. After meeting some of the people stayed to talk to me about religion, and wished to be instructed in the name of the Lord. I think five or six of them are truly awakened; one, I think, has experienced a change of heart."

A month after the Christmas Conference adjourned, Mr. Black returned to Boston, where he spent some time. He says: "February 1.* I went to Boston and tarried there mostly until May, and then sailed for Cumberland. When I first arrived here I preached in private houses, none of the ministers being willing to lend me their pulpits. First I preached in a chamber at the north end of the town; but the people crowded in so that the floor sank an inch or two. I then preached in a large room at the north end of the town, where, in time of prayer, one of the beams of the floor broke, and the people screamed as if going to be swallowed up by an earthquake. After this I preached in Mr. Skillman's meeting-house two or three times; but this was like to cause a quarrel between him and the committee who had offered the use of the house, so I declined preaching there any more. We then procured from the select men the use of the North Latin school-house; but neither would this contain half the people, and one of the beams here, also, giving way, the people were terribly afraid, and screamed as if about to be crushed to death. I preached most of the time in the Sandiman's meeting-house, as most of that society are now scattered, but it would not contain half the people. The last Sabbath I preached in Dr. Elliot's meeting-house to, I suppose, up-

* This was in 1785.

ward of two thousand people. This was the only meeting-house that would hold the people; nor would this house hold them if they had timely notice. I trust my labor here was not in vain. The word reached the hearts of many, who soon after found peace with God." *

It seems very unfortunate that a Methodist society was not immediately organized in Boston, and a suitable preacher placed over it as pastor. Such interest and impression as Black's preaching produced indicated that the metropolis of New England was a promising field for the newly-organized Church to cultivate. But no advantage was at that time taken of the inviting conditions. Black says of the converts of his ministry: "As there was no Methodist preacher there when I left them, they joined Mr. Skillman's church, who is a lively, useful Baptist preacher."

Thus the labors of this Methodist preacher in Boston contributed, as the preaching of Methodists has often done, to the increase of another branch of the Church of Christ. Stevens, in his "Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism in New England," alludes to Black's ministry in Boston: "The fear of the contempt associated with the new name of Methodist," says Stevens, "led the converts under Mr. Black's short ministry to take shelter in other denominations, so that, on the arrival of later Methodist laborers, no distinct vestiges of these first efforts were found." The early records show the effect of Black's preaching. "Many who now are at rest in the arms of that Christ whom he preached, and many who are at this day bright and exemplary lights in the Baptist Churches of the city, have dated their convictions of sin from his sermons." † Mr. Lee did not enter Boston

* "Arminian Magazine," London, 1791, p. 412.

† "History of the Gathering of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston," preserved in the Church Records of 1800. Quoted in Stevens's "Memorials."

until more than five years after Mr. Black's departure, namely, July 9, 1790.

Jesse Lee has been called the Apostle of New England. At the Conference in New York in 1789 he was appointed to Stamford Circuit, in Connecticut. He entered the State on June 11, and preached his first sermon at Norwalk.

The state of religion in New England at the time Lee founded the new Church there is indicated by the Rev. Timothy Merritt, who says: "The clergy in New England generally at the time the Methodists came into this part of the country were, in spirit and in labors, rather a secular than an evangelical body of men. Pure and undefiled religion was in a very low state; and scarcely any means were used for its revival except the mere routine of Sabbath-day preaching. Revivals were very seldom; prayer-meetings were hardly known, and evening meetings were highly censured. The spirit of religious enterprise was not then waked up; the missionary spirit was not then roused; and the sacred office was used rather as the means of a livelihood than as a spiritual calling of the deepest interest. Men 'qualified themselves for the ministry of the word,' set their price, and waited for a 'call.' Some said they 'would not undervalue their classmates by preaching for less than the common price.' There were ministers in those days who had been settled and dismissed and who were out of employ. There were also parishes without settled ministers, and these generally raised money to pay for preaching a part of the year. When any of these ministers were employed, it was to preach the money out; and then they returned to their secular employments, like other men, and waited for another call." *

The spiritual tone of the ministry, as a class, and the methods of religious labor that prevailed among them, called for such an infusion of revival power into New England "orthodoxy" as Methodism was able to give. In

* Merritt's "Review of a Pamphlet entitled Letters on Methodism." 1831.

entering that region, therefore, Lee bore the refreshing waters of life to multitudes who were famishing.

Lee's methods were bold and effective. The Rev. Peter Vannest, who was an early laborer in that region, says: "New England was remarkable for its small towns. Mr. Lee, in going through these towns, would ride up to a door and knock with his whip, and inquire of the persons presenting themselves, in his soft and pleasant way, 'Do you know me? I am a Methodist preacher. Will you let me preach in your house?' The reply would perhaps be 'No!' 'Farewell,' he would say, and so proceed through the village without any encouragement. He would then put his horse at the tavern, and go to the school-house and ask for liberty to preach there. If denied the use of the school-house, he would select some spot in the open air, go to the school, and request the children to inform their parents and neighbors that a Methodist preacher would preach at such time and place as he would name.

"After preaching in those places, and before dismissing the congregation, he would remark that if any one would open his door he would preach again in two weeks; and most generally he would receive an invitation, and thus procure at once a place to preach and a place to lodge. In this way he would form a two-weeks' circuit, send for a preacher to take charge of it, and so pass on to form another.

"He met with very considerable opposition from both preachers and people of that day; but the Lord had prepared him for the work. Being a large man, none dared to molest his person; and his piety was such that none could irritate him. His sweet temper had a great influence upon the people wherever he went; so much so, that they would not believe their own preachers when they took occasion to preach against him." *

Lee's method of forming circuits as he traveled, is

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," March 21, 1850.

shown by a passage in his Journal in February, 1790. He says: "I have now formed New Haven Circuit for one preacher. The distance which the preacher has to travel in going around once in two weeks is one hundred and twenty miles. For this circuit we have to preach in three cities, five towns pretty thickly settled, and several country places. I have now gone around it, and made my own appointments, and have preached seventeen times within the last fourteen days."

When he had been but little over eight months in New England, Lee received re-enforcements. Three preachers, among the most talented in the Connection, went to his help in February, 1790. He says: "We had our quarterly meeting at Dan Town. Just before the time of meeting, a friend informed me that there were three preachers coming from a distance to labor with me in New England. I was greatly pleased at the report, and my heart seemed to reply, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' When I saw them riding up I stood and looked at them, and could say from my heart, 'Thou hast well done that thou art come.' Brother Jacob Brush, an elder, George Roberts and Daniel Smith, two young preachers, came from Maryland State to assist me in this part of the world. No one knows but God and myself what comfort and joy I felt at their arrival. Surely the Lord has had respect unto my prayers, and granted my request."

Under the ministry of these devoted and eloquent itinerants the young Church took root rapidly in the land of the Pilgrims. Additions continued to be made to the ministerial force from time to time, and the work increased, so that in five years after Lee entered New England there were two presiding elders' districts in its territory, manned by nearly thirty preachers, with a membership of about one thousand eight hundred.

Asbury was deeply devoted to the cause and the preachers in the Eastern States, of which the Rev. Henry

Smith gives impressive proof: "I have not forgotten," says Mr. Smith, "the affecting illustrations our venerable Asbury used to give us in the Baltimore Conference of the New England preachers—their self-denying, cross-bearing, laborious, and enterprising spirit. But when he spoke of their zeal, their privations and hardships, and, above all, their 'deep poverty,' and the stern opposition they met with from almost every class of people, we were melted into tears. Once, however, the good old Bishop had liked to have given offense to some when he told us of a good brother, and I think gave his name, who dined with his family on a blackberry pie and nothing else. Some seemed to think that the Bishop presented him as a model for married preachers. O how earnestly the Bishop begged for our surplus funds for New England, and how cheerfully they were voted." *

Jesse Lee gave eight years to the work in New England. He was one of the most distinguished and influential of the early American itinerants. He was born in Prince George County, Virginia, in 1758, and was converted in his boyhood. He began his career as a traveling preacher in 1782. His endowments specially fitted him for his work. "The moral features of that distinguished man were strongly marked. He possessed a sanguine temperament, and was in a high degree good-natured." "By constitution and disposition he seemed formed for a pioneer. No length of journey nor frequency of preaching could deprive him of sleep or of appetite. He suffered little from lowness of spirits or discouragements, and the feelings of a stranger seemed to be unknown to him. Wherever night overtook him he made himself welcome. 'My name,' he would say, 'is Jesse Lee. I am a Methodist preacher. I will stay all night with you and preach for you if you will let me.'

"I have heard a young preacher relate an anecdote very

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," September 7, 1842.

characteristic of the proof of his feelings against repulsion. They had at the fall of night obtained access to a strange house, through the courtesy of the lady, and just as they were seated at the supper the gentleman came home, to whom she politely introduced them as Methodist preachers; but his mind was occupied by sentiments little friendly to those of hospitality or good-breeding. He gave vent to his inveterate prejudices in a strain of abuse and invective so rude as to deprive the young man of all inclination for supper. Mr. Lee, with the utmost composure, made a hearty meal of it, now and then introducing a pleasant remark, and before bed-time so conciliated his feelings that he joined in evening prayer.

"Mr. Lee was famous as a gleaner of anecdotes. It was to him that we were indebted for the story of Joe Wheaton. It bears that a preacher of this name, in company with a colored colleague, who was to follow him in the order of the meeting, in the excess of his voluntary humility, again and again called himself Joe Wheaton, the meanest of all God's creatures. The colored brother, in his turn, with equal modesty and propriety, solicited the attention of the congregation to the testimony of the weakest of all God's creatures, *except* Joe Wheaton.

"As a speaker, neither you nor I will, perhaps, ever meet with his like; his occasional and peculiar greatness had no parallel, and filled the hearer with wonder. There was in his voice a sonorous and tremulous tone which in its animated strains became monotonous; but when the Spirit came upon him, and the feelings began to work, without any arrangement he would pour forth unpremeditated monosyllables in short sentences, and raise a commotion of feelings in a congregation which baffled all description. I have seen a Conference weeping around him like children while he was relating the progress of the work of God under his presidency." *

* Nicholas Snethen in "Wesleyan Repository."

Mr. Lee rejoiced in the success of his fellow-laborers, and, indeed, of any who won souls. "How often," says Mr. Snethen, "have we seen his eyes sparkle with more than mortal fires, and his cheeks glow with a deeper flush, when he has been speaking of the usefulness of a preacher, be his name or sect what it might!"

"Mr. Lee possessed," says Ware, "uncommon colloquial powers and a fascinating address. His readiness at repartee was scarcely equaled; and by the skillful use of this talent he often taught those disposed to be witty at his expense that the safest way to deal with him was to be civil. He was fired with missionary zeal. The truth which had made him free he wished to proclaim to others, and especially to the inquisitive and enterprising descendants of the Pilgrims. He did not doubt that it would make its way into that land and open a wide field for action and usefulness. He was, moreover, a man of great moral courage, and more than ordinary preaching talents. He preached with more ease than any other man I ever knew, and was, I think, the best every-day preacher in the Connection."

The Rev. Henry Boehm gave the author of this volume a brief description of Mr. Lee. He said Lee "had a very good, distinct utterance. His manner was energetic, but not boisterous. In his preaching he would generally say things that would produce excitement in the direction of mirthfulness, and that would seem to pave the way for something solemn. He was pointed, and pressed the truth home to the conscience. He could move the tender emotions, and produce weeping as well as smiles in his audience." Mr. Lee "was fleshy and of the largest size, his face full and florid, its features rather small, and his eyes blue."

At the General Conference of 1800 he was nearly elected a Bishop. It is said that he confidently expected that such ecclesiastical promotion would be given him, and that he

did not conceal his disappointment at his defeat. William Colbert was present at the election, and in his Journal records the following: "Monday, 12. This morning was elected that venerable old man, Richard Whatcoat, to the office of Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church. There were one hundred and fifteen votes, out of which he had fifty-nine, Jesse Lee fifty-six." At the first ballot there was a tie. The Journal of the General Conference agrees with Colbert as to the number of votes cast, and also as to the number received by Whatcoat. It states, however, as we shall see, that Jesse Lee received fifty-five votes, and that there was one blank. If, on the first ballot, one more vote had been cast for Lee, he would have lived in history as the first native Bishop of American Methodism.

We have seen, on a former page, that Dr. Phœbus has conveyed the idea that Mr. Lee's defeat was the result of his low-church opinions respecting the Episcopate. Mr. Snethen, however, who was a member and the Secretary of the General Conference of 1800, holds forth a different view. Snethen says: "He did not fail of his election from any disagreement between him and the preachers on the score of principle, but from indications which led many to believe that he would be wanting in fellow-feeling."

Mr. Lee occupied a commanding position before the public, as is shown by the fact that he filled the position of chaplain to Congress. He continued in the ministry to the end of his useful life. The Methodist centenarian, Father Boehm, said: "I was with him when he died. His death occurred at the house of Mr. Sellers, in Caroline County, Maryland. He was a very heavy man, and there was an abrasion of the skin of one of his legs, and it became inflamed. Several physicians attended him, but they were unable to arrest the inflammation. Mortification and death ensued. His mind was clear to the last." Re-

specting his death, Mr. Boehm says: "Through the first part of his illness his mind was much weighed down so that he spoke but little." Afterward, "He broke out in ecstasies of joy. He delivered himself in words like these: 'Glory! glory! glory! Halleluiah! Jesus reigns!' He directed me to write to his brother Ned, and let him know he died happy in the Lord." The venerable Peter Vannest said of Mr. Lee: "He left among us few better or greater men."

CHAPTER XV.

THOMAS COKE.

THOMAS COKE was born in South Wales, September 9, 1747. In his seventeenth year he entered Jesus College, in the University of Oxford. There he formed skeptical opinions. His university career was marked by gayety, if not dissipation. The interposition of a clergyman of Wales whom he visited, and the reading of Sherlock, rescued him from infidelity. Having taken open ground in favor of Christianity, he severed his infidel associations, and decided to become a clergyman. He was, however, without a vital religious experience.

Coke obtained a curacy at South Petherton, in Somersetshire, England. He sought to be useful, and his ministerial services were attractive. The numbers who assembled to hear him exceeded the capacity of the church. Failing to induce the vestry of the parish to increase the accommodations by erecting a gallery in the church, he did it himself.

About this time he found a profitable spiritual counselor in Mr. Maxfield, who was an early helper of Mr. Wesley, and who took orders in the Church of England. He soon began to see the way of salvation by faith. About this time, also, Alleine's "Alarm to the Unconverted" attracted his attention. "Sherlock's discourses had produced a revolution in his opinions; but Alleine's Alarm now produced a revolution in his heart." He earnestly sought salvation.

While he was seeking and preaching Christ, Coke visited a family to which belonged a poor laborer who was a Methodist class-leader. In conversation with him he received further light. He declared that he owed more

to this simple Christian than to any other. At length, while he was engaged in the proclamation of the Gospel to others, he received the peace of God.

From the pulpit he declared to the people what the Lord had done for his soul. While preaching he soared into freedom from his manuscript, and soon cast it aside. He spoke from the abundance of his heart, and felt little need of written sermons. Under his first extemporaneous discourse three souls were awakened.

His fervor and zeal soon aroused antagonism. His genteel auditors were displeased, and the neighboring clergy did not approve his course. A charge was presented against him to the bishop, who, however, declined to suspend him. Coke's enemies applied to the rector of the parish, who promised his dismission. The parish bells chimed him out.

Coke, some time afterward, met Mr. Wesley. In August, 1777, Wesley wrote: "I went forward to Taunton with Dr. Coke, who, being dismissed from his curacy, has bidden adieu to his honorable name, and is determined to cast in his lot with us." In the following year he was appointed to London. There his ministry was very popular and useful. Frequently the houses could not contain the people who thronged to hear him. He resorted to field-preaching in the metropolis, and his word was attended with power from on high.

Mr. Wesley employed him, also, in visiting the societies in Ireland alternately with himself, and on the second day of September, 1784, he set him apart as a Superintendent of the Methodist societies in the United States. On the eighth day of September he sailed for New York, where he landed on the third of November. On the second of June, 1785, he took ship for his return voyage to England.

Dr. Coke never remained longer than a few months at a time in the United States. He retained his connection with the Wesleyan Conference in England while he lived.

How he was regarded by the American Methodists is shown by one of his American contemporaries, who says: "Dr. Coke cannot be considered even as a bird of passage, for he never stayed long enough among us to hatch a brood; but we can say that we wished it, and sought by private entreaties and other means to effect it." The Rev. Minton Thrift, a biographer of the Rev. Jesse Lee, says: "Dr. Coke could not be prevailed upon to confine himself to America, but, from the multiplicity of plans which engaged his attention, he was obliged to spend the greater part of his time in Great Britain or the West Indies. Bishop Asbury was therefore left with the whole burden of the Superintendency." Asbury desired an assistant at the General Conference of 1796, "but upon Dr. Coke giving assurance to the Conference that he would give his services entirely to the Methodists in America, Mr. Asbury did not insist upon the appointment of another at that time. Dr. Coke soon discovered that he had promised more than he was able to perform; for we do not learn that he was present at more than one or two Conferences from the year 1796 to 1800." * Previous to his visit in 1796 Dr. Coke had made five visits to the United States, namely, in 1784, 1787, 1789, 1791, and 1792. He was never here after 1804. Providence, he thought, kept him elsewhere.

Dr. Coke's ability in the pulpit, his zeal and abounding labors, together with his scholarly polish and attainments, rendered him a valuable acquisition to the young Church, as he also was to the Wesleyan Connection in England. His services were heartily given to both.

It is doubtful whether his labors in the pulpit were as effective in America as they were in England. It is said that his sermon in Baltimore on the occasion of the ordination of Bishop Asbury at the Christmas Conference produced a profound impression. There are very few traditions of his having exercised extraordinary pulpit power

*Thrift's Memoir of Lee, p. 266.

during his visits to the United States. The author of this volume wrote from the lips of the venerated Henry Boehm, when he was ninety-nine years old, a brief reminiscence of Coke. Mr. Boehm met him at the General Conference of 1800. He said: "I was privileged to dine with the Bishops during the Conference, and thus met Dr. Coke once in social life. I heard him preach at the ordination of Whatcoat. Coke had a feminine voice, but could be heard distinctly by a large audience. He was a ready speaker, but I have no recollection of any special effect being produced by his preaching. I only heard him once."

The Rev. William Colbert alludes to Coke's preaching in very favorable but brief terms. At the first General Conference of the Church, in 1792, at Baltimore, he says: "Dr. Coke preached a delightful sermon on Romans viii, 16." He applies the same adjective to a sermon Coke preached during the General Conference of 1796. In December, 1797, Dr. Coke preached in St. George's, Philadelphia, "and," says Colbert, "I heard him with delight." His text on that occasion was 1 John v, 12. At the General Conference at Baltimore, May, 1804, Mr. Colbert wrote in his Journal: "Sunday, 13. I heard Dr. Coke preach an excellent sermon this morning, in Light Street, from 2 Cor. iii, 18."

The late Dr. John W. Francis, of the city of New York, once heard Dr. Coke, and received a strong and abiding impression. He says: "His indomitable zeal and devotion were manifest to all. Glowing with devotional fervor, his shrill voice penetrated the remotest part of the assembly. He discoursed on God's providence, and terminated the exercises with reading the beautiful hymn of Addison, 'The Lord my pasture shall prepare.' So distinctly enunciatory was his manner that he almost electrified the audience. He dealt in the pathetic, and adepts in preaching might profit by Coke."* The Rev. William

* Sprague's Annals.

Thacher says: "As a preacher, I would not claim for him the highest distinction, yet he was undoubtedly among the more attractive and useful preachers of his day. Some of his discourses rose to a high order of eloquence." *

Dr. Coke was of low stature, but corpulent. Says the Rev. William Thacher: "He had a fine complexion, dark hair, and a dark, piercing eye, while his countenance, in conversation, was ordinarily clothed with a serene and benignant smile. His voice was melody itself, and his whole manner bland and attractive—indeed, he was one of the finest models of a Christian gentleman I remember to have met."

Dr. Coke had an impulsive temperament, which sometimes betrayed him into inconsiderate acts. The Rev. Nicholas Snethen describes him as a man whose "sensibilities were constitutionally too quick and powerful for his prudence." Different occasions furnished illustrations of this statement. One of these was when he wrote, April 24, 1791, to Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, a letter in which he made a proposal looking to the union of the American Methodists with that Church. This letter was written without the knowledge of Asbury, or, it is likely, of any American preacher. Mr. Wesley was then dead, but the painful tidings had not reached this country, and, therefore, Coke wrote without knowledge of that fact. He meant that in case Bishop White did not see a prospect of the union being accomplished, that the matter should be secret; for he said: "One thing only I will claim of your candor, that if you have no thoughts of improving this proposal you will burn this letter and take no more notice of it." The circumstances which led to the publication of the letter are given by Bishop White, who says he "kept silence on the subject of it, except in the permitted communications to the Bishops until the summer of 1804, when I received, in one day, two letters from

* Sprague's Annals.

the Eastern Shore of Maryland. One of them was from the Rev. Simon Wilmer, of the Episcopal Church, and the other from the Rev. Mr. M'Claskey, of the Methodist communion. In a conversation between these two gentlemen the former had affirmed the fact of Dr. Coke's application, which was disbelieved by the other. This produced their respective letters, which were answered by a statement of the fact. The matter being afterward variously reported, a copy of the letter was, after some lapse of time, delivered to the Rev. Dr. Kemp, of Maryland, and at last became published in a controversy raised in the diocese."

The opening of the correspondence by Dr. Coke could not, of course, be approved by the Church. At best it was an ill-advised act. Such a correspondence, which involved the rights and interests of the entire denomination, he was not authorized to initiate. Dr. Bangs has said: "Those who have known these facts from the beginning have always considered it one of those precipitate acts of Dr. Coke, which his best friends and warmest admirers cannot but acknowledge sometimes marked his course. He, indeed, lived to see and acknowledge his error."

Another occasion in which Dr. Coke's impulses mastered his prudence was that when he preached on the death of Wesley, in Baltimore, and alluded to the act by which, in 1787, Mr. Wesley's name was expunged from the Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Coke was greatly grieved, not to say exasperated, by that action. Mr. Wesley was venerated by the American Methodists. This Dr. Coke knew. In his Journal he says: "It is remarkable how many children have been baptized in this country by the Christian name of Wesley. I question whether there have not been some hundreds of instances in all the States." And this was in Mr. Wesley's life-time. The ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, however, disputed Mr. Wesley's authority to govern them ecclesiastically, and

resisted it, as we have seen, so far as to strike his name from their official documents.

On the 20th of April, 1791, as his Journal states,* Dr. Coke was at Port Royal, and received intelligence of the death of Mr. Wesley. The next morning he started in haste for New York, to reach a British packet. He says: "I rode by day and by night. At Alexandria the news was confirmed by a letter from London. For near a day I was not able to weep; but afterward some refreshing tears gave me almost inexpressible ease." On Sunday, the first of May, he reached Baltimore, "time enough," he says, "to send to the preacher, who was then engaged in divine service, to publish me to preach in the evening. The congregation was very large, and I had but one subject and, I may almost say, but one text: "And Elisha saw it, and he cried, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!'"

* There appears to be confusion of dates in the Journal. April 27, Dr. Coke speaks of being at a certain place, and in the succeeding paragraph, he gives the date of April 20, and notes his arrival at Port Royal. He then passes on without giving dates, but it would appear that the next day he heard of Wesley's death. The preceding passages in his Journal, however, indicate that his date of hearing of that event is wrong, for on April 27 he states, "we opened our Conference at Petersburg, Virginia." On April 24, he states that he preached in Richmond. Thence he rode to another Conference, twenty-five miles from Richmond, and then says: "April 20, I am now come among the cedar-trees. They are not large, but their spreading boughs and conical appearance are very grand." He then proceeds to speak of his work and, without inserting any date, adds: "A gentleman of the name of Hipkins, a capital merchant in the town, sent us a genteel invitation to sup with him and lodge at his house. I accepted of it. Soon after I came in he observed that the Philadelphia paper had informed the public of the death of Mr. Wesley. I gave no credit to the account, but, however, entreated the favor of seeing the paper. He sent immediately to a neighboring merchant, who took in that paper, and about ten o'clock the melancholy record arrived. I saw by the account that it was too true, that I had lost my friend, and that the world had lost a burning and a shining light." I think there is no doubt that Dr. Coke, who has here confused dates in his Journal, wrote his letter to Bishop White previous to the night he spent at the home of Mr. Hipkins, at Port Royal, Virginia. The fact that he reached Baltimore, May 1, after such rapid traveling, corroborates this opinion.

While preaching, his feelings, already excited, seem to have been wrought to an unwonted pitch, and he uttered very severe words. He declared "that he deemed it the greatest sin of his ministerial life that he did not raise his voice against this act of treacherous cruelty from one side of the continent to the other." This declaration is attested by one who heard the sermon, and who says that Dr. Coke furthermore called it "an almost diabolical act, namely, the expunging of Mr. Wesley's name from the American Minutes. He said that history furnished no parallel to it." Dr. Coke also said of that act of the Conference respecting Mr. Wesley: "I doubt whether the cruel usage he received in Baltimore, in 1787, when he was excommunicated, (wonderful and most unparalleled step!) did not hasten his death. Indeed, I little doubt it. For from the time he was informed of it, he began to hang down his head, and to think he had lived long enough."

With respect to this sermon it must be remembered that Dr. Coke was smitten with grief by the death of Mr. Wesley; that he had been traveling both day and night in order to get to London as quickly as possible; that he was in the same city, and perhaps in the same church, where the act which he denounced was done, and therefore that his ardent feelings under the exciting conditions of the occasion swayed his tongue more than was their wont. Then the reports given by his hearers of what he said may, unintentionally, have been overdrawn. Yet there can be no doubt that his expressions in that sermon concerning the treatment of Mr. Wesley by the Conference of 1787 were strong. He doubtless spoke as he believed, but his ardor gained advantage of his judgment.

Mr. O'Kelly, in his attack on Mr. Asbury, referred to that discourse of Coke thus: "Did not Thomas, in behalf of Wesley, explode the conduct of Francis before a congregation in Baltimore?" To which Mr. Snethen replied:

"No, he did not. Dr. Coke made mention in the pulpit of Wesley's name being left out of the Minutes, and offered several remarks upon it; but he did not blame Mr. Asbury for it. He never thought it to be Mr. Asbury's fault." *

Shortly after this Dr. Coke wrote of Wesley from "on board the *William Penn*, in the Delaware Bay, May 17, 1791. O, my dear Brother Morrell, our deceased friend was worthy of much honor. I love him now more than ever. Surely he did not deserve the most cruel treatment he met with from five or six men in Baltimore, in the year 1787. I feel an inclination to publish their names to the world, that all suspicion may be taken away concerning others." "Dr. Coke had been so long accustomed to opposition," says his biographer, "that perseverance became necessary for him to carry his purposes into effect. This he possessed in an uncommon degree. He has been accused of giving way to a spirit of irritation. But this charge is only just under certain restrictions. And even where it is applicable, much allowance must be made for the trying circumstances in which he was placed, and for the multiplicity of jarring interests which it was scarcely possible for any man to reconcile, but the claims of which it was incumbent on him to adjust. Convinced of his error he was more ready to make acknowledgment, and to beg pardon for his deviation from the rigid rule of decorum, than he had been to furnish an occasion for either. And the peculiar grace with which this was done rarely failed to disarm resentment and to procure for him the veneration and esteem of those whom he had opposed. If we subtract his irritability, his profusion of money, his improvidence, his precipitancy, and his occasionally severe expressions in the pulpit, nothing of magnitude will remain which his scrutinizing survivors would not be proud to own." †

* Snethen's "Reply to O'Kelly." † Drew's Life of Dr. Coke.

Dr. Coke became unpleasantly involved with the Rev. Devereux Jarratt, an Episcopal clergyman of Virginia, who held very cordial relations with the Methodists. Jarratt was a friend of Asbury, who says of him: "He was the first who received our despised preachers, when strangers and unfriended. He took them to his house, and had societies formed in his parish. Some of his people became traveling preachers among us." * Concerning his ministerial character and work, Asbury said: "He was a faithful and successful preacher. He had witnessed four or five periodical revivals of religion in his parish. When he began his labors there was no other (that he knew of) evangelical minister in all the province! He traveled into several counties, and there were very few parish churches within fifty miles of his own in which he had not preached; to which labors of love and zeal were added preaching the word of life on solitary plantations and in meeting-houses." More than a year before Coke sailed for America, Dromgoole wrote to Wesley: "Mr. Jarratt is, and has been, a great friend of the cause of God."

Mr. Jarratt also, according to Asbury, "possessed a great deal of natural oratory." He preached for the Methodists, and administered to them the sacrament of the Lord's Supper when they were without ordained ministers. Indeed, they knew him as a fellow-laborer in the kingdom and patience of Jesus. Learning of his decease, in 1801, Asbury wrote: "The old prophet, I hear, is dead." He preached a funeral sermon for Jarratt on the text, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Dr. Coke met Mr. Jarratt on the 30th of March, 1785. Concerning that interview Coke wrote: "After duty, he

* One of these was Francis Poythress, who was Asbury's chief lieutenant in the West, until mental disease removed him from the field.

went with me to one Brother Seaward's, in the State of Virginia, about eight miles off. We now talked largely on the Minutes concerning slavery, but he would not be persuaded. The secret is, he has twenty-four slaves of his own. I am afraid he will do infinite hurt by his opposition to our rules."

The feelings with which Dr. Coke parted with Mr. Jarratt at that time were, probably, not very complacent, as in a short time subsequently he wrote in his Journal: "Passed by the house of Mr. Jarratt, that violent assertor of the propriety and justice of Negro slavery. At noon I preached at White Oak Chapel, and lodged that night at the house of Brother Rees, one of our local preachers, a friend of God and man. He lives by Mr. Jarratt, and is the great bar in the hands of God to that fallen man's ruining our whole work in that neighborhood." *

Of course, Mr. Jarratt was not pleased with such writing. He answered Dr. Coke, whose Journal was published in the American "Arminian Magazine," in 1789, in a manner that seemed somewhat retaliatory. Jarratt said: "Dr. Coke's Journal I hope to treat with becoming contempt. But should I light on him in a proper place, I might try to convict him of sin, or else furnish him with matter for a new Journal. His little soul, I believe, was exasperated at me for laughing at his episcopal credentials, which he vainly drew out upon me, with Mr. Wesley's hand and seal annexed forsooth." As to the matter of slavery, Mr. Jarratt says: "The truth is, the little man read the Minutes to me, and asked my opinion of them. I told him I was no friend to slavery; but, however, I did not think the Minutes proper, for two reasons: First, the disturbance it would make and the opposition it would meet in the societies; second, he ought not to make a disputable matter a

* Coke's "Journal," p. 39. It should be remembered that Coke was so strongly antislavery that it would have been no injustice to describe him as an abolitionist. This, evidently, Jarratt was not.

term of communion; and as he was a stranger in the land, the spirit of Virginia would not brook force. Probably I gave him some advice, which the spirit of the Bishop looked upon as an insult. But I care not one straw for what he has journalized about me." *

Jarratt's words seem lacking in the love that suffereth long and is kind. Such ebullitions of feeling by good men, and especially by leaders in the Church, excite pity and grief. No doubt the cutting words of Coke roused indignation in Jarratt; and the leniency of the latter toward a system of bondage, which Coke abhorred as "the sum of all villainies," probably stirred his righteous soul to utter what, in other circumstances, he would have shrunk from writing. The weaknesses of even greatly pious men are made conspicuously visible by the very light which shines forth in their good works. We claim not angelic perfection for the fathers of Methodism, but sincerity, devotion to God and his Church, and self-sacrificing zeal for the salvation of men.

Dr. Coke was one of Mr. Wesley's executors. He and the Rev. Henry Moore published a "Life of Wesley" the year following his death. In regard to this work Bishop Asbury said: "It is in general well compiled; but the history of American Methodism is inaccurate in some of its details, and in some which are interesting." Dr. Coke wrote a number of books; indeed, he was a voluminous writer. In Baltimore, a few weeks after the Christmas Conference, he wrote in his Journal, as published in the American "Arminian Magazine," thus: "Here I have printed, according to the desire of the Conference, the substance of a sermon which I preached at the ordination of Brother Asbury to the office of a Bishop. There is nothing in the world, I think, about which I find more reluctance than the becoming an author, but they force

* Maryland Methodism and Slavery, by David Creamer. "Zion's Herald," October 25, 1882.

me into it." He published several sermons; also, a commentary on the Bible. The latter was "confessedly a compilation." He said of it that "he had only been like the bee, culling honey from every flower." He also wrote a history of the West Indies and other works. In preparing his commentary for the press, he engaged the assistance of Samuel Drew, who became his biographer.

Dr. Coke was thoroughly in love with the great truths of Christianity, and with those distinctive tenets which have been so successfully propagated by Methodism. He defended by his pen the doctrine of justification by faith, as defined by Mr. Wesley, and also that of the witness of the Spirit. "Of his zeal and activity in spreading among the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ, no evidence can be more decisive than the travels, voyages, journeys, perils, and difficulties which his life affords. 'In labors more abundant,' is a motto that has been almost proverbially affixed to his name, since death has closed his eyes. Besides crossing the Atlantic eighteen times, and performing various other subordinate voyages, his journeys while on shore were almost without a parallel. On the American continent he traveled with the offers of salvation from 'the Mississippi to the bay of Penobscot, and from the Chesapeake to the waters of Ohio.' 'For nearly thirty years,' says Dr. Clarke, 'the late indefatigable and regretted Dr. Thomas Coke conducted those missions abroad, under the direction of the Methodist Conference, and by his rare and scarcely paralleled labors, and those connected with him in that work, *many thousands* of souls have been brought to the knowledge of God. He gave his life to this work. It was his meat and his drink; and the convulsive effort that terminated his days was a missionary exertion to take the Gospel to the heathen of Serendib.'"

It has been said of Dr. Coke that in the missionary work to which he was devoted he "stooped to the very drudgery of charity, and gratuitously pleaded the cause of a perish-

ing world from door to door." Missions were established under his labors "in almost every English island in the West Indies. The flame of his missionary zeal burst forth on British America. Methodist societies were formed by him or under his superintendence in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the islands on the eastern coast of the American continent, and subsequently in the Bahamas and Bermuda; and to the coast of Africa also he directed his zealous efforts."

He contributed largely of his own funds to the cause of missions and to charity. It appears that he gave attention and probably aid to Bishop Asbury's parents in England. It has been remarked how steadfast was Asbury's friendship for Coke, as illustrated by the plea he made in his behalf at the General Conference of 1796. Asbury was a man of too sturdy honor to forget Coke's kindness. He wrote to his parents in England: "I have requested, and will request Dr. Coke, as he is so frequently in England, to know and supply, or order a supply, of all your wants. Every act of kindness done to you in England, I shall return to the doctor when in America; and also repay what he requires." At another time he said to his parents: "I wrote to Dr. Coke to let you have ten guineas, and I would repay him when he comes to the continent." To his mother he wrote: "My mind is at rest with respect to your temporalities from the assurances I have had that Brother Coke will supply you." Again he says to her: "If at any time you should be shortened, write to the doctor and he will supply you." Coke's peculiarities, which were distasteful to some of the American preachers, and which possibly Asbury did not admire, could not alienate Asbury's filial heart from the man who kindly ministered to the necessities of his parents. Dr. Bangs heard Asbury preach the funeral sermon of Coke before the New York Conference, and he says: "I distinctly remember to have heard him say that never did

a faithful servant wait on his master with more delight than he had done during their travels together in America on Dr. Coke."

Dr. Coke expended "a considerable sum, in addition to what Conference allowed, on the outfit of that mission to Asia in which he ended his days. The property which at his departure from England he consigned over to his executors, in trust, he has bequeathed, exclusively of two legacies, to the ultimate support of that general cause, in a strong attachment to which he lived and died. This property he has given to 'a certain benefit society instituted by the Conference of the people called Methodists, late in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, deceased, called 'The Itinerant Methodist Preacher's Annuity.'"

In a sermon shortly before he sailed on his last missionary voyage Dr. Coke said: "It is of little consequence whether we take our flight to glory from the land of our nativity, from the trackless ocean, or the shores of Ceylon." From "the trackless ocean" he did take his "flight." On the morning of the third of May, 1814, Dr. Coke, who had been previously indisposed, was found dead on the cabin floor. On that day the mortal remains of the untiring and devoted Christian propagandist were consigned to the ocean, to await the swift coming day when the sea shall give up its dead.

Of Dr. Coke it has been said, by Dr. Bangs: "His artlessness, impelled as it was by a strong and irrepressible desire to do good, may have betrayed him into errors; but these errors are more than atoned for by that untiring zeal and perpetual activity in the cause of Christ which characterized his career of usefulness, and which places his name upon the records of the Church as one of her brightest ornaments and most devoted ministers. Though his bones are mingled with the coral sands of the Indian Ocean, it must not be forgotten that he had traversed the broad

Atlantic no less than eighteen times on errands of mercy and love to his American brethren. The name of Coke, therefore, will ever be associated with the worthies who founded the Methodist Episcopal Church, and hallowed in the recollection of those of her sons who take pleasure in 'marking well her bulwarks, and telling the towers thereof.' Nor is it more than a sacred duty to rescue his name from undeserved reproach, and place it on one of those pillars in that temple of our glory which his hands contributed to erect."

Dr. Coke was not perfect; but he was an able, zealous, successful laborer in the great harvest-field. His name was known and his influence was felt in many lands. Two of the most laborious Christian ministers whose names are known to history were joined together as the first Superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church, namely, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury.

Asbury wrote in the beginning of 1814, concerning Coke's last missionary enterprise, these words: "We learn that Bishop Coke, with seven young preachers, has sailed for the East Indies. The British Society is poor, as well as ourselves, it would appear; this is a good sign. In less than one hundred years [seventy-five years] Methodism has spread over three quarters of the globe; and it is now about to carry the Gospel of salvation into Asia. Amen."

At the New York Conference, in May, 1815, Bishop Asbury says: "By vote I preached the funeral sermon for Dr. Coke—of blessed mind and soul—of the third branch of Oxonian Methodists—a gentleman, a scholar, and a Bishop to us—and as a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labors, and in services the greatest man in the last century." Dr. Bangs, who was present, says that "in that sermon be bore the most full and unequivocal testimony to the integrity, fidelity, usefulness, and exalted character of his deceased colleague."

At the Conference held in Lebanon, Ohio, in October of

the same year, Asbury delivered another tribute to the memory of his ascended friend. It was less than six months before his own coronation. Of that service he wrote: "Ministers should be resplendent, like a city illuminated in the night: a great light amidst churches in darkness and slumber—like Dr. Coke, whose effulgence beamed forth in missions, in labors, in Europe, in America, in the isles of the sea, and in Asia. I took occasion to particularize the abundant labors of this distinguished man of God."

BISHOP WHATCOAT.

CHAPTER XVI.

RICHARD WHATCOAT.

ONE of the saintliest men of his time was Richard Whatcoat. He was born in the parish of Quinton, England, in the year 1736. While young his father died, leaving him and four other children with a widowed mother. At the age of thirteen he became an apprentice, in which capacity he served eight years. "I was never heard," he says, "during this time to swear a vain oath, nor was I ever given to lying, gaming, drunkenness, or any other presumptuous sin, but was commended for my honesty and sobriety."

After he reached his majority he became acquainted with a family with whom he went to hear the Methodists. He listened attentively and thought the preacher spoke as if he knew all his heart. He was deeply awakened. He began to realize the "terrors of the Lord," and could have wished to be annihilated if thereby he might escape the Judgment. "Life," he says, "was a burden, and I became regardless of all things under the sun. Now all my virtues, which I had some reliance on once, appeared as filthy rags. Many discouraging thoughts were put into my mind, as 'Many are called, but few chosen;' 'Hath not the potter power over his own clay, to make one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor?' From which it was suggested to me that I was made to dishonor, and so must inevitably perish.

"On September 3, 1758, being overwhelmed with guilt and fear, as I was reading, it was as if one whispered to me, 'Thou hadst better read no more, for the more thou readest the more thou wilt know.' I paused a little and then resolved, let the consequence be what it may, I will

proceed. When I came to those words, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,' as I fixed my eyes upon them, in a moment my darkness was removed, and the Spirit did bear witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. In the same instant I was filled with unspeakable peace and joy in believing. All fear of death, judgment, and hell, suddenly vanished away. Before this I was kept awake by anguish and fear, so that I could not get an hour's sound sleep at night. Now I wanted not sleep, being abundantly refreshed by contemplating the rich display of God's mercy in adopting me to be an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

"This peace and joy continued about three weeks, after which it was suggested to me, 'Hast not thou deceived thyself? Is it not presumption to think thou art a child of God? But if thou art, thou wilt soon fall away; thou wilt not endure to the end!' This threw me into great heaviness, but it did not continue long; for as I gave myself unto prayer, and to reading and hearing the word of God at all opportunities, my evidence became clearer and clearer, my faith and love stronger and stronger. I found the accomplishment of the promise: 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.'

"I soon found that, though I was justified freely, I was not wholly sanctified. This brought me into a deep concern, and confirmed my resolution to admit of no peace nor truce with the evils which I still found in my heart. After many sharp and painful conflicts and many gracious visitations, on March 28, 1761, my spirit was drawn out and engaged in wrestling with God for about two hours in a manner I never did before. Suddenly I was stripped of all but love. I was all love and prayer and praise. In this happy state, rejoicing evermore and in every thing giving thanks, I continued for some years, wanting nothing but God for soul or body more than I received from day to day.

"I began to look around, and to observe more than ever the whole world full of sin and misery. I felt a strong desire for others to partake of the same happiness; I longed to declare unto them what I knew of our Saviour. I first sat down to count the cost, and being then fully convinced of my duty, I began to exhort those of the neighboring towns to repent and believe the Gospel. This I did for about a year and a half; but was still convinced I might be more useful as a traveling preacher. This I mentioned to Mr. Pawson a little before the Conference of 1769. A little after it he wrote and let me know that he had proposed me at the Conference, and that I was accepted as a probationer, and stationed in the Oxfordshire Circuit."

Whatcoat now began that course of ministerial labor which he prosecuted with such fidelity in two hemispheres for nearly forty years. When he had been eleven years an itinerant in England and in Ireland, he wrote that God had enabled him to persevere in the work "with a single eye." He adds: "He has kept my heart disengaged from all creature loves, and all desire of worldly happiness. I can truly say

> "'Blest with the scorn of finite good
> My soul is lightened of her load
> And seeks the things above.'"*

He, as we have seen, was ordained by Mr. Wesley for the work in the United States in 1784, and arrived at New York, with Coke and Vasey, November 3d of that year. Thenceforth he devoted his talents and energies to the work of God in the New World. He and Asbury were friends in their youth in England, and were true yoke-fellows in America. Whatcoat also enjoyed the confidence of Wesley in a large degree, as is shown by the fact that the latter designated him for the Superintendency in the new Church.

* "Arminian Magazine," London, 1781.

Mr. Whatcoat was a very laborious man, as his extensive and unceasing activity as preacher, presiding elder, and Superintendent in this country, attest. He went forward joyfully amid weariness and hardship proclaiming in the wilds of America as he did previously in populous Europe "the glorious Gospel of Christ." Three years before his promotion to the episcopacy he traveled a district which "embraced almost the entire scope of country between the James and the Roanoke Rivers, and from the Blue Ridge to the sea-board."

Mr. Whatcoat states that "on this district we passed through and touched on thirty counties in Virginia and North Carolina; it took me about six, or between that and seven, hundred miles to go through my district once in three months. We had a great revival in several parts of this district. I filled up my time with agood degree of peace and consolation."

We have in a former chapter contemplated the powerful revival movement of 1789. In that great work Whatcoat was a laborer in Maryland, where he at the time exercised the office of presiding elder. In his Journal we get a view of the revival as he witnessed it in connection with his zealous labors. He says: "The 26th of April, 1789, at a quarterly meeting held at the old meeting-house near Cambridge, Dover County, the Lord came in power at our sacrament. The cries of mourners and the ecstasies of believers were such that the preacher's voice could scarcely be heard for three hours. Many were added to the number of true believers. At our quarterly meeting, held at St. Michael's, for Talbot Circuit, the power of the Lord was present to wound and to heal. Sabbath following our quarterly meeting, held at Johnstown, for Caroline Circuit, was yet more glorious. The power of our Lord came down at our love-feast. The house was filled with the members of our societies, and great numbers of people were on the outside. The doors and windows were thrown open, and

some thronged in at the latter. Such times my eyes never beheld before."

Whatcoat further says, that "the power of the Lord spread from circuit to circuit. O how delightful it is to preach glad tidings when we see souls coming home to God as doves to their windows."

In the year 1800 Mr. Whatcoat was elected Bishop by a very small majority over his competitor, Jesse Lee, at the General Conference, in Baltimore. He was then advanced in years, yet he undertook the laborious charge, and, with a sanctity of spirit and purity of life seldom surpassed, he administered the high trust that was confided to him by the Church until he

> "His body with his charge laid down
> And ceased at once to work and live."

The year that he entered upon the labors of the episcopate we find him and Asbury braving the hardships of a Southern tour. A man of sixty-four years, he says: "The way we traveled from Nashville to Knoxville, Tennessee, was about two hundred and twenty-three miles, partly a southwest course. It was trying to our delicate constitutions to ride through the rain a great part of the day until late in the night, and then to encamp on the wet ground, the wind and rain beating hard upon us." They proceeded to Augusta, Georgia. Says Whatcoat: "O what mountains and rocks we had to pass over! When we came within a few miles of the hot springs, Bishop Asbury got a friend to lead his horse; but the road being rough and narrow the horse stumbled or started and turned the sulky bottom upward, between the Paint Rock, French Broad River. The horse lay quietly on his back until we released the harness. The carriage rested against a large sapling, which supported it from going down into the river."*

With reference to his travels as a Superintendent the

* "Whatcoat's Journal," in Memoirs by Phœbus.

aged Whatcoat subsequently wrote: "In the last twelve months I have traveled about three thousand seven hundred miles, and in the sixty-seventh year of my age, though I have had considerable afflictions, which have greatly shaken this house of clay."

Bishop Whatcoat was a man of very respectable talents and of extraordinary piety. His saintly character and unselfish labors were a benediction to the young Church in America. His experience, wisdom, zeal, and toil were freely given to it, and he was an effective agent in building it up in holiness as well as in numbers and resources. Beginning with its organization, he served it unweariedly and with complete consecration for more than twenty-one years, and then he triumphantly ascended to his rest. "The chief glory of his life," says one who knew him, "was that he was always about his Master's business."

The Rev. Nicholas Snethen, who had excellent opportunities to know him, thus describes the second Bishop who gave himself fully to episcopal service in the Church: "Mr. Whatcoat was not among the least. His life, as a pious young lady used to say, 'was like an even-spun thread.' He had a second suit of natural hair, which did not grow gray till late in life, * and he never lost entirely his European color. His features were small and his countenance smooth and placid. In his neat, plain parson's gray, after returning from the devotions of the closet, a painter or a sculptor might have taken him as a model for a representation of piety. The mild, the complacent, and the dignified were so happily blended in his looks as to fill the beholder with reverence and love. His speech was somewhat slow and drawling, but not disagreeable after a little. His excellent matter came so warm from the heart that a general spirit of devotion never failed to kindle and blaze afresh under its sounds. His very appearance in the pulpit did his hearers good.

* Mr. Boehm says Whatcoat's last hair never turned gray.

"His arrangement and expression were uncommonly clear and perspicuous. He preached more frequently from the Old Testament than any preacher I remember to have heard. It was delightful to hear him in his best mood upon, 'But the word of the Lord is not bound.' Never was the truth of an assertion more fully verified by the hearer's feelings."

The Rev. James Patterson says: "I have often lamented that so little notice has been taken of Bishop Whatcoat. I traveled in company with him several times before and after he was made a Bishop, and a more upright and holy man I believe I never saw. I heard him preach when far advanced in life from, 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.' I was astonished to hear a sermon delivered with such pathos and animation, that made not only the good man feel, but compelled the most unfeeling to feel, by a man almost worn away by the lapse of time and excessive labor." *

The Rev. Dr. Laban Clark, who knew Whatcoat only as a Bishop, gives a view of him in that office: "My first acquaintance with him was at the New York Conference in 1801. I was charmed not more with the simplicity and dignity of his manner as a presiding officer in the Conference, than I was with his kind and cordial intercourse with the preachers out of it. The week following I was in his company parts of two days in Westchester County and heard him preach an excellent sermon on 'We glory in tribulations also,' etc. The discourse was plain and instructive, and, in a high degree, spiritual. While it was adapted to all Christians, it was especially appropriate to the young preachers who were entering the field of itinerant labor at a sacrifice which it is not now easy to estimate.

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," February 15, 1828.

"In 1803 Bishop Whatcoat, in company with Bishop Asbury, attended the Conference at Ashgrove, Washington County, New York, at which Bishop Hedding, myself, and some others were admitted to holy orders. Bishop Whatcoat preached the ordination sermon; and with such force of argument and all-subduing pathos did he urge holinesss of heart and life that the whole congregation was moved as a forest waves before the power of a mighty wind. At the commencement of his discourse there was a breathless silence, the interest became more intense as he advanced, and before he concluded there was a general burst of impassioned feeling throughout the whole assembly." *

Mr. Boehm says Whatcoat excelled as a preacher. "He could melt and mold an audience as few men ever did. The holy anointing rested on him and a peculiar unction attended his words. He professed purity of heart, and no one who knew him doubted his possession of it. A holier man has not lived since the days of the seraphic Fletcher." † Bishop Asbury said of his ascended colleague: "A man so uniformly good I have not known in Europe or America."

Whatcoat attended a love-feast in the city of New York which was long remembered. Dr. Wakeley, in his "Lost Chapters," says: "An old minister who was present gave me a description of the scene. The house was filled with glory, and was so full there was not bread enough to supply all. Some one informed Whatcoat they were out of bread. 'Glory to God!' said the old man, 'there is bread enough in heaven. In our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare.' Shout after shout, halleluiah after halleluiah, rapidly succeeded each other. When he prayed it seemed as if he had one hand hold of heaven and the other of earth and he brought them together. As he

*Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit."

† Boehm's Reminiscences.

prayed he cried: 'Power, power! *now*, Lord, send the power!' O what power came down! Not a stream; it was like a cloud breaking and inundating the earth."

The ministry of Methodism has been distinguished for the proclamation of a full as well as a present salvation. They have shown to believers the largeness of Christian privilege. Holiness was a familiar theme with Bishop Whatcoat. In 1802 he visited a considerable district in the State of New York. Mr. Colbert was then presiding elder of Albany District. September 8th of that year Colbert says: "Heard Bishop Whatcoat preach on sanctification. His text was: 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.'" The following Sunday he was at a quarterly meeting. Colbert says: "Thanks to God we had a melting season in the love-feast. Ten joined the society. We then took a large congregation into the woods. Bishop Whatcoat preached a powerful sermon from Job xxi, 22. I spoke after him from Luke xvi, 9. Brother Bidlack spoke after me. We then administered the Lord's Supper, and a good time we had. Several were brought to cry to God for clean hearts." *

The venerable Boehm, when he had nearly completed a century of life, related to the author of this volume some of his recollections of Whatcoat, and also of his death. Mr. Boehm said: "Bishop Whatcoat's preaching indicated deep piety. I have seen congregations melted under his sermons like wax before the fire. He had a plain, gospel

* The Journal of Mr. Colbert shows that it was usual at quarterly meetings eighty to ninety years ago to have two sermons, one or more exhortations, besides the sacrament, at a single public service on Sunday. The following from Colbert, February 4, 1798, is an illustration: "This morning we had a love-feast. Many precious souls, I trust, were happy, and some cried to the Lord for mercy; after which Brother Ware preached on John iii, 7. Brother Chandler gave them a discourse after him. I spoke after him, but being pinched for time I had not much satisfaction in speaking. When I had done we proceeded to the administration of the Lord's Supper, which closed the solemnities of the day."

style. His manner was mixed with mildness, energy, and power. He was a stout man, of good presence. He died in my circuit in 1806. I shaved him two days before he died. While I was shaving him he became affected, and I had to stop. Then he said: 'I have been thinking of the many pious people I have known in Europe and America, and what a glorious time we shall have when we meet in heaven." Bishop Whatcoat died at the house of Richard Bassett, Dover, Delaware, July 5, 1806; and there in the grave his dust awaits "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God."

It was fortunate for the new Church that Richard Whatcoat was sent to share in the work of laying its foundations and rearing its superstructure. Although he had not that vast capacity for administration which distinguished Asbury, he was a beautiful example of the meek and holy faith which he so diligently propagated. It is said that once when Asbury complained of the annoyance he suffered from so much company, Whatcoat mildly answered, "O Bishop, how much worse we should feel if we were entirely neglected." Asbury accepted the reproof, and thanked him.

The serene, the gentle, the holy Whatcoat was a fitting companion in the Superintendency of the indomitable, resolute, and consecrated Asbury. Of Whatcoat it has been said: "This holy man was sent to the Church as if for a sample, to show what a life of peace and holiness Christians may attain on earth, where sincerity, privation, diligence, watchfulness, love of divine communion, and humble and active faith do meet and center."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PREACHERS OF THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE.

IN the first chapter we saw that the Christmas Conference was a remarkable body. It performed a great, beneficent, and enduring work. It brought into being a Church of unique form, which has proved efficient beyond any modern ecclesiastical organization in spreading evangelical Christianity. In another chapter we ascertained the names of a number of the preachers who composed the Conference which founded the Methodist Episcopal Church. We will now contemplate their character and their history.

WILLIAM BLACK.

William Black was born in Huddersfield, England, in the year 1760. He removed to Nova Scotia in 1775. He was the subject of powerful religious exercises in 1779. He was happily converted, and soon began to preach. He was a very fervent, zealous Christian, and one of the earliest itinerants of Methodism in that part of the British dominions. In 1784 he came to the United States to obtain laborers for Nova Scotia, and attended the Christmas Conference, preaching in Boston, Long Island, and Connecticut in the course of his travels. Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell were, as we have seen, appointed to re-enforce the work there, and soon sailed for Halifax. Thirty-one years afterward Mr. Black again appeared in Baltimore, as fraternal delegate from the British Conference to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816. Before that time, however, he had visited his brethren in the United States, at General Con-

ference. We have seen that he preached for some time in Boston, after the close of the Christmas Conference, in 1785. This appears to have been the whole of his relation to the work in the United States. He died September 8, 1834.

CALEB BOYER.

Mr. Boyer was one of the luminaries of the young Church. He was evidently a man of mental poise and force, and of high excellence of character. He was a native of Kent County, Delaware, and was converted under the ministry of Mr. Garrettson, in 1778. He soon joined the itinerancy. "He was a great extemporizer, and was considered one of the greatest preachers" of the denomination. The insufficiency of the ministerial support in that day to properly maintain a family led him to locate in 1788. For twenty-five years thereafter he gave the Church his services in a local capacity. It is believed that he located in Delaware.*

Of Mr. Boyer the Rev. Thomas Smith gives two brief but suggestive notices in his Journal. July 26, 1798, he says: "Brother Caleb Boyer, an old traveling preacher, aided in the services of this day. Though he is tired in the work, he is not tired of the work. His counsel and advice were a blessing to me, and, no doubt, to many others." A few months later Mr. Smith says: "Brother Caleb Boyer preached in my place, much to the comfort of his hearers. He is profound in divinity, a man of sound judgment, and well matured in the things of God." Thomas Ware says "Boyer was the Paul" of the old itinerancy.

The latest glimpse we get of Mr. Boyer is at the General Conference of 1804. The question whether local preachers should be admitted to the order of elder was considered by that Conference, and failed by a tie vote. While the question was pending the following action was

* Lednum's "Rise of Methodism in America," pp. 304, 305.

taken, as appears by the "Journal of the General Conference:" "Solomon Harris moved, as a favor, that Brother Caleb Boyer have permission to make one speech on the subject now before the house. Carried."* Being a located preacher, Mr. Boyer was not, of course, a member of the body. Such courtesy of the General Conference to him shows the estimation in which he was held by the ministry at that time.

LE ROY COLE.

Le Roy Cole was born in Essex County, Virginia, June 5, 1749. Until he was twenty-six years old the Methodist preachers were not known in his section. A brother of Cole heard them elsewhere and brought a very favorable report of their labors. "From what he said," says Cole, "I was deeply impressed that they were Gospel ministers, and that it was the work of God among them. From this view I went into the field and lifted my hands and heart to God, and made a solemn vow that I would serve him all the days of my life. I prepared myself, and went about one hundred miles in pursuit of these ministers. I called at a house where I understood the people were Methodists, and while I was there a traveling minister came in, namely, James Foster. I viewed him with scrutiny, and was well pleased with all his movements. Under his prayer my feelings were so awakened that, after he closed, I sat by him and put my arm around him. About three weeks after, I set out to seek the Lord. The Father of mercies was graciously pleased at a night meeting, between the hours of twelve and one, powerfully to convert my soul. From that time I walked in the sunshine of his love from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year."†

After his conversion Cole invited Mr. Shadford to visit

* "Journal of the General Conference," 1804, p. 62.

† "Christian Advocate and Journal," March 19, 1830.

his father's house. Shadford did so, and spent some time in that region. The year that Cole was converted Shadford gave him a license to preach. He joined the itinerancy and his first appointment was Tar River.* His name first appears on the Minutes as one of four preachers who were sent to North Carolina.

At the Christmas Conference Mr. Cole was promoted to the orders of deacon and elder. At the Conference in June, 1785, held in Baltimore, he was suspended from the ministry. What the charges against him were is not recorded, but Dr. Coke says: "We opened our Conference and were driven to the painful necessity of suspending a member, and he no less than an elder, a man who for ten years had retained an unblemished reputation. 'Let him that most assuredly standeth take heed lest he fall.'" † This statement refers to Cole, for he was the only "elder" who was deposed from the ministry at that Conference. The following brief passage occurs in the Minutes of 1785: "Quest. 9. Who is laid aside? Le Roy Cole."

Whatever was the allegation against him, Cole asserted his innocence. It is said he was the victim of a fierce persecution, from which he was unable to escape. He firmly trusted God for his vindication, and "in less than a year the Conference became convinced of the injustice of its verdict, and invited Mr. Cole again into their fellowship."‡ He then traveled a few years, when, in impaired health, he retired from the itinerant field.

In the year 1808 he removed to Kentucky. In 1814 he entered the Kentucky Conference. He labored only a few years in the ranks of the western itinerants, but he remained in fellowship with his brethren in Conference until his death.

The Rev. Henry Boehm states that he was with Bishop

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," March 19, 1830.

† Coke's Journal, American "Arminian Magazine," 1789, p. 397.

‡ Redford's "History of Methodism in Kentucky," vol. ii, pp. 312, 313.

Asbury when the latter visited Mr. Cole, at his farm, near Lexington, Kentucky. "He was," says Mr. Boehm, "beloved and respected. Mr. Asbury's visiting him, and the friendship he exhibited, shows he had confidence in him." *

Cole is described as "a lively preacher." He occupied a front rank in the ministry of Kentucky, "and by the holiness of his life, as well as by the pursuasive power of his eloquence, pushed forward the victories of the Cross." †

It is said that camp-meetings twice passed into disuse in a portion of the country, and were each time revived by Mr. Cole. In this department of labor he was very useful. He was an uncle, by marriage, of the late Bishop Kavanaugh, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. After a service of more than fifty years in the ministry, though part of that time he spent in a local sphere, he died February 6, 1830. "He was a model of patience in severe bodily affliction." His end was triumphant.

JAMES O. CROMWELL.

It is said that Mr. Cromwell's father was a Churchman whose home, near Baltimore, he opened to the Methodists. James appears as an itinerant in 1780. In 1781 Mr. Cromwell was with Joseph Everett in West Jersey. Everett alludes to Cromwell as one "whom I loved and looked upon as a good man." In 1782 he was on Fluvanna Circuit, in Virginia, with William Watters, who says: "Brother Cromwell labored hard and diligently, but was often much discouraged, and even dejected." From the Christmas Conference, as we have seen, he went as a missionary to Nova Scotia. While there Mr. Wesley corresponded with him, as appears from a letter addressed to him at Shelburne, Nova Scotia, dated February 26, 1786. In this letter Wesley speaks of one of his early mission-

* Boehm's Reminiscences, p. 322.

† Redford's "History of Methodism in Kentucky."

aries to America who became an Episcopal clergyman: "I wish Mr. Pilmoor may do much good. But I am afraid he will rather do hurt; for he does not believe any thing of Christian perfection, and I think he does believe final perseverance." Mr. Wesley concludes his letter to Cromwell thus: "I now almost give up the thought of seeing America any more. Our borders are now enlarged, including not only Great Britain and America, but the Isle of Man, the Isle of Wight, with Jersey and Guernsey.

"I am, dear James, your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY." *

Returning from Nova Scotia, Cromwell, in 1788, was in charge of the district of New Jersey. He remained three years in that field. During his presiding eldership the great revival of 1789 in New Jersey occurred. "The old people, who remember his quarterly visitations in this region, say he was a devout man and a powerful preacher."†

Cromwell found a wife in New Jersey. In 1789 Miss Elizabeth Fidler, of that State, became Mrs. Cromwell. Her father was among the first of those who opened their doors to Methodist preachers in that province. She was converted at the age of sixteen, and years afterward she united her destinies with those of the presiding elder of the district of New Jersey. She is described as "a Christian of no ordinary grade." Fearless of death, she died, at the residence of her son, in Baltimore County, Maryland, October 8, 1832.‡

In 1792 Cromwell was appointed to Baltimore. In 1793 he located.

The Rev. Henry Smith labored in Baltimore Circuit in 1806, and there knew Mr. Cromwell. Mr. Smith says: "While on this circuit I became acquainted with another

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," June 24, 1846.

† Raybold's "Methodism in West Jersey."

‡ "Christian Advocate and Journal," November 9, 1832.

old soldier of the Cross, namely, James O. Cromwell. He was with Freeborn Garrettson in Nova Scotia after the Revolutionary War, and his labors and sufferings had been great. He was an humble, sweet-spirited man, though his mind was very much impaired, and he the mere shadow of what he had been. He still preached occasionally."

Cromwell's health was probably shattered by his extensive travels, privations, and toils. His sufferings continued through his last years. His wife's "faith and patience were fully tested" during the years of his affliction, in which she gave him her watchful care. "Amid all her watchings and anxious concern for the partner of her youth she exhibited a mind tranquilized by the consolations of the Holy Spirit."* Mr. Cromwell died in 1829.† Henry Smith says of him: "He now rests from his labors, and is free from his infirmities."

EDWARD DROMGOOLE.

Mr. Dromgoole was born in Sligo, Ireland, about the year 1751. "The name is quite ancient in Irish history, and has been traced back for several hundred years to its early origin among the clans of Finland. It is a compound name, and its two component parts are derived from Drom, a mountain, and Goole, a clan; which, put together, signify a mountain clan." ‡

Mr. Dromgoole was brought up a Roman Catholic. When he was approaching manhood he heard the Methodists in his native country, and was convicted of sin. He began to read the Bible. "I joined in society," he says, "and in a few weeks resolved to read my recantation pub-

* Obituary notice of Mrs. Cromwell, in "Christian Advocate and Journal," November 9, 1832.

† "Christian Advocate and Journal," November 9, 1832.

‡ Edward Dromgoole, Esq., of Brunswick County, Va., who kindly wrote for the author of this volume a sketch of his sainted grandfather.

licly in the church. This procured me the displeasure of some of my relations." *

In May, 1770, he sailed for America, and reached Baltimore the following August. He settled at Frederick, Maryland. In the ensuing autumn he heard Mr. Strawbridge. "During twelve months," he says, "I had frequent and strong convictions on my mind, and was often under great fear lest I should be lost forever. One Sunday evening, while I was in great distress of soul at prayer, the Lord visited me with his salvation; but being ignorant, I did not then believe that my sins were forgiven, and after a few days lost my comfort. I now felt different from what I had done. My burden was removed, and yet I feared I was given over to a hard heart, for I could neither repent nor fear as I had done. My distress and trouble greatly increased, till, one evening in prayer, the Lord showed me that he had blessed me."

Dromgoole began to preach about 1774, and in that year he was appointed to Baltimore. His travels were extensive before and during the Revolution, in which time he witnessed, notwithstanding the disturbed state of the country, the triumphs of the Gospel. "The work in America," he wrote at the close of the war, "has gone on with amazing swiftness since the war began." Says his grandson: "As soon as the war broke out, he took the oath of allegiance to his adopted country, and carefully preserved the certificate thereof as a testimonial of his fidelity to the American cause."

Mr. Dromgoole retired finally from the traveling work about 1785. He was married to Rebecca Walton on the 7th of March, 1777. In 1780 Mr. Asbury, in his Journal, says: "Edward Dromgoole is a good preacher, but entangled with a family. We spoke of a plan for building houses in every circuit for preachers' wives, and the societies to supply their families with bread and

* Letter to Wesley, in "Arminian Magazine," 1791, p. 219.

meat, as the preachers should travel from place to place as when single; for unless something of the kind be done, we shall have no preachers but young ones in a few years. They will marry and stop."

Dromgoole was one upon whom Asbury leaned in the time of the threatening agitation about the sacraments. "Edward Dromgoole," he says, "is hearty in good old Methodism; we have had great union. I hope he will check the spirit of some of the divisive men." As we have seen, when Asbury, Garrettson, and Watters went to the Conference in Virginia, in 1780, as the representatives of the Northern preachers, to see if the division, which seemed imminent, could be averted, Dromgoole united with them in behalf of unity. "The Conference," says Asbury, "was called. Brothers Watters, Garrettson, and myself stood back, and being afterward joined by Brother Dromgoole, we were desired to come in, and I was permitted to speak. In the afternoon we met. The preachers appeared to be farther off. There had been, I thought, some talking out of doors. When we could not come to a conclusion with them, we withdrew and left them to deliberate on the condition I offered, which was, to suspend the measures they had taken for one year. After an hour's conference we called to receive their answer, which was, they could not submit to the terms of union. I then prepared to leave the house and go to a neighbor's to lodge, under the heaviest cloud I ever felt in America. O what I felt! Nor I alone, but the agents on both sides. They wept like children, but kept their opinions."

That was a critical, ominous day in the history of Methodism in America—the darkest day, indeed, it has ever seen. In that hour of which Asbury writes, the rupture of the infant societies by the determination of the Southern preachers to continue the administration of the sacraments, seemed inevitable. Indeed, the word that sealed the division was already spoken. Had it not been re-

called, it is somewhat doubtful whether the Methodist Episcopal Church would ever have been constituted.

But Zion was not forsaken. In the darkness and the peril the divine word was fulfilled: "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." The next day Asbury says: "I returned to take leave of Conference, and to go immediately to the North; but found they were brought to an agreement while I had been praying as with a broken heart. Brothers Watters and Garrettson had been praying up stairs where the Conference sat. We heard what they had to say. Surely the hand of God has been greatly seen in all this."* Thus in its uttermost extremity American Methodism was rescued from threatened dismemberment, while its leaders, like the patriarch, wrestled with God and prevailed. The Church of Asbury and Dromgoole has ever triumphed through prayer.

The labors of Mr. Dromgoole in that critical time, in behalf of peace and union, were earnest, and, no doubt, effective. A Southern man, he was, probably, an instrument through whom the Southern preachers were led to yield, and thus the cause escaped what seemed a certain calamity. In less than five years afterward we see him in the historical Conference at Baltimore, assisting in founding the Church which, had his influence been exerted in an opposite direction in the perilous juncture in 1780, might never have been erected.

In the Christmas Conference Mr. Dromgoole was, by his age, character, and services, conspicuous. Except Watters, he had been longer in the itinerant service than any preacher in that Conference who was raised up in America. He had been more than ten years in the ministerial ranks, and was a witness of the struggles of the

*The agreement was to suspend the use of the sacraments for a time, and write to Mr. Wesley. John Dickins was to draw up the statement of the case which was to be sent to the founder of Methodism.

Wesleyan cause in this country in its most critical period. He was at that time thirty-three years old, of mature experience, capable and reliable.

Dromgoole's name appears for the last time in the Minutes in 1785, when he was appointed to Brunswick Circuit. He located in Brunswick County, Virginia, where he spent almost half a century of his life. We get a glimpse of him as a laborer in the wonderful revival that swept over that region in 1787. He continued to labor, respected and beloved, to the end. Dr. Coke makes honorable mention of him in his Journal of 1796. He says: "Brother Dromgoole was one of the first of the native traveling preachers in America, and has always preserved a most unblemished character, and is a man of considerable abilities; though his (I believe, erroneous) views of things led him to give up the important and extensive itinerant plan for a much smaller sphere of action in the vineyard of the Lord." *

Mr. Dromgoole was a man of marked excellence. He "possessed a high order of intellect; he was plain in his dress, gentle and unassuming in his deportment, of deep piety, and of great moral worth. He was, for piety, zeal, and usefulness, the embodiment of a primitive Methodist preacher." He had originality of mind, and was not accustomed to repeat his sermons. His preaching was pertinent, eloquent, effective. A sermon he preached at a camp-meeting in North Carolina produced a powerful effect, and is described by the Rev. B. Devaney, who says: "He commenced by saying, 'That the attention of the people may not be drawn off by inquiring who the preacher is, I will tell you. You recollect that about thirty years ago there was a young man who traveled here by the name of Edward Dromgoole; I am the man.' His text was, 'God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.' The power of God

* "Arminian Magazine," 1798, p. 401.

was his theme, and when, by the force of his Irish eloquence, he carried us in imagination to the place 'where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,' it was awfully sublime; it was beyond description. His voice, his countenance, and his gestures, all gave a power to his eloquence which is rarely equaled even at this day. The copious flow of tears, and the awful peals of his voice, showed that the preacher's whole soul was thrown into the subject, and it produced the most thrilling effect that I had ever witnessed. There was not a dry eye among the hundreds who listened to him on that occasion." *

He retained his power as a preacher to old age. In the summer of 1831 he preached at a camp-meeting in Virginia. Ira A. Easter, son of the celebrated Rev. John Easter, in writing of that meeting, says: "There was nothing that more sensibly affected my own mind, or appeared more generally to interest the large audience that attended, than the powerfully evangelical preaching of our aged father in the ministry, the Rev. Edward Dromgoole, now in the eighty-first year of his age, his heart still glowing with the love of God, and his tongue dwelling with rapture all divine on Jesus Christ, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life to perishing sinners. Take him all in all, I shall never see his like again." †

Mr. Dromgoole, says his grandson, "was much esteemed by his entire neighborhood. On account of his age and Christian virtues, he was universally recognized as one among the patriarchal fathers." The Rev. B. Devaney says of him: "In my long experience and close observation I have never known a local preacher who maintained so noble a stand and wielded so wide a moral influence." He died, leaving quite an estate. "His last will and testament shows method, justice, charity, business, gratitude, wisdom, and strong affection for the numerous de-

* Bennett's "Methodism in Virginia."

† "Methodist Protestant," September 2, 1831.

scendants who partook of his blood and name. He selected the text from which he desired his funeral sermon to be preached. It was: 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'" *

Mr. Dromgoole has been represented as having in his old age become connected with the Methodist Protestant Church. Of this his grandson writes: "During the excited controversy in the Church which gave rise to the Methodist Protestant organization, he appears to have taken no part. He retained his connection with the Episcopal Methodists." In May, 1835, he, from the bosom of the Church he helped to organize fifty years before, ascended to the Church triumphant.

IRA ELLIS.

Mr. Ellis was born in Sussex County, Virginia, September 25, 1761. He was converted in his nineteenth year. Before he was twenty years old he left his father's house and spent some time with Le Roy Cole, on Mr. Cole's circuit. At the age of twenty Ellis was sent as a traveling preacher to Mecklenburg Circuit. He labored in Philadelphia, in Charleston, and elsewhere, besides traveling districts as presiding elder. He succeeded James O'Kelly on the South District of Virginia, in 1792, when that minister withdrew from the Church. William M'Kendree, who was one of the party of O'Kelly, but who returned to the itinerant work, was then a preacher in this district, and he says: "Ira Ellis, my presiding elder, was a comfort to me. From him I obtained information and counsel which were of inestimable value to me in my dilemma. It is my opinion that the Church is much indebted to Infinite Goodness for a man of his wisdom and prudence at that day."

* Manuscript Sketch by E. Dromgoole, Esq., Brunswick Co., Va.

Mr. Ellis and M'Kendree remained friends. In 1827 the latter received a letter from his early presiding elder, in which Ellis displays his ardent devotion to the Church. "I have," he says, "been begging, by subscription, money to build a Methodist meeting-house, but have at times been ready to give it up, but have at length determined to build. Myself and son have undertaken it, and are bound to make good any deficiency. Of his experience, he says: "My decaying tabernacle will shortly fall. O may I be found ready! In the midst of all, my dull heart is too backward, and I am too slow to believe and realize the precious promises. I still feel like trying to get safe out of the world, and would not exchange my hopes and prospects for a world."

Mr. Ellis married Mrs. Mary Mason, widow of the Rev. John Mason, March 12, 1795. As was the rule with married preachers, he located. The loss of such a man to the itinerancy was a calamity. Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat spoke of him as "one that traveled fourteen years extensively, faithfully, and acceptably." Of him Bishop Asbury wrote: "Ira Ellis is a man of quick and solid parts. I have often thought that had fortune given him the same advantages of education, he would have displayed abilities not inferior to a Jefferson or a Madison. But he has in an eminent degree something better than learning—he has undissembled sincerity, great modesty, deep fidelity, great ingenuity, and uncommon power of reasoning. His English schooling has been good. He is a good man, of most even temper, whom I never saw angry, but often in heaviness through manifold temptations. He is a good preacher, too. O may he finish his life as he hath continued it, faithful and acceptable and successful in the traveling and local line!" In view of the fact that Asbury seldom wrote commendatory words of living men, this is a remerkable tribute.

In 1829 Mr. Ellis removed to Kentucky. He there

labored in a local sphere, as he had done for nearly thirty years previously in Virginia. He preached his last sermon on the day he was seventy-five years old in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Seven months before his death paralysis smote him, and his mind was considerably impaired. He died, January 16, 1841, at the residence of his son, A. M. Ellis, in Christian County, Kentucky, in the eightieth year of his age.

A writer in the "Western Christian Advocate," April 9, 1841, says: "Ira Ellis is no more—a name renowned among Methodist preachers of an early day. The generation who heard the popular, eloquent, evangelical, and logical sermons of Ira Ellis more than half a century ago, has long since preceded him to that bourn from which no traveler returns. He married, and retired, withdrawing himself from public view, as if alarmed at his own popularity, in 1795."

A local historian says of him: "Mr. Ellis became an itinerant preacher when there were only fifty-four preachers and ten thousand five hundred and thirty-nine Methodists in America. He brought into the ministry talents of a high order, a constitution unimpaired, a spotless life, and a zeal that courted sacrifices, privation, and toil. His labors were abundant, and his fidelity to the Church was never challenged. He bore the ensign of the Cross over hill and vale, into the crowded city, and to the mountain's crest, amid pestilence, disease, and death, and never for a moment furled the banner which he held in his grasp. Under his ministry hundreds were awakened and turned to God." *

REUBEN ELLIS.

Mr. Ellis was a native of North Carolina. His name first appears in the Minutes in 1777, when he was appointed as a colleague of Dromgoole to Amelia Circuit,

* Redford's "Methodism in Kentucky," vol. iii.

Virginia. He was one of the early leaders of the Church. When he died the Minutes said of him: "It is a doubt whether there be one left in all the Connection higher, if equal, in standing, piety, and usefulnesss." He gave his life unselfishly to the work of God and Methodism. He only wanted the privilege of preaching the Gospel. "In twenty years of labor, to our knowledge," say the Minutes, "he never laid up twenty pounds by preaching." They also say: "He, like a Fletcher, lived as on the verge of eternity, enjoying much of the presence of God. He was always ready to fill any station to which he was appointed, although he might go through the fire of temptation and waters of affliction. The people of South Carolina well knew his excellent work as a Christian and a minister of Christ."

Mr. Ellis was of large stature, but of slender constitution. He was a safe guide, a true and generous friend. As a preacher, he was "weighty and powerful." His labors extended from Baltimore to South Carolina. Bishop Asbury, in his Journal, says of him: "I was somewhat alarmed at the sudden death of Reuben Ellis, who hath been in the ministry upward of twenty years; a faithful man of God, of slow but very solid parts. He was an excellent counselor, and a steady yoke-fellow in Jesus." The Minutes say: "His last station was Baltimore, where he ended his warfare in the month of February, 1796. His way opened to his everlasting rest, and he closed his eyes to see his God."

JOSEPH EVERETT.

Mr. Everett was born in Queen Anne County, Maryland, June 17, 1732. His family were adherents of the Church of England. He says: "We went to church, and what did we hear, when we went, think you? Why, a parcel of dead morality, and that delivered by a blind, avaricious minister, sent by the devil to deceive the people."

He was brought to repentance through the preaching of the New Lights, or Whitefieldites. "One Sabbath day," he says, "as I was sitting in my house, none of the family being at home, meditating on the things of God, I took up the Bible, and it providentially opened at the eleventh chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and, casting my eyes on the fifth verse, read to the fourteenth. At that moment I saw there was something to be experienced in religion that I was a stranger to. I laid down the Bible, and went directly up into a private chamber to seek the blessing, And everlasting praises be to Him who has said, 'Seek, and ye shall find.' I was on my knees but a very few moments before he shed abroad his love in such a manner in my heart, that I knew Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world, the everlasting Son of the Father, and my Saviour, and that I had redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of my sins. I felt these words by the power of his Spirit run through my soul, so that the tongue of a Gabriel could not have expressed what I felt: 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' I felt such raptures, and saw with the eyes of my faith such beauties in the Lord Jesus Christ, as opened a heaven of love in my breast. This glorious change was wrought in my soul on the thirteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1763."

Everett lost his fervor and became a backslider. Thus for years he lived without God. He became a soldier of the Revolution. "I was well satisfied," he says, "while I was in the army, that I was not prepared for death. Yet sure I am, that before I would have fled from the place of action or danger, without orders, I would have dropped dead on the spot, though my soul would have been lost forever."

He heard Mr. Asbury at Judge White's and was turned again into the path of life. "I went forward," he says, "in the way pointed out in God's word, until the fifth day of

April, 1778, between seven and eight in the evening. Then the Lord once more set my soul at liberty, by speaking me freely justified, and shedding abroad his love in my heart by the Holy Ghost. Then I felt that the love which I received among the New Lights, and lost by departing from God, I now found among the Methodists, and could give them the right hand of fellowship."

Everett soon began to recommend religion to his acquaintances, and felt moved to preach the Gospel. At length that charming preacher, whose ministry gave Thomas Ware to Methodism, Mr. Pedicord,* initiated him into the itinerancy. He says: "At that time Caleb B. Pedicord, that man of God, was riding in the circuit, and was to preach near Mr. White's the next day, in Delaware State; and sent for me to meet him there. I was well acquainted with him and went to meet him. After he had preached, he asked me to give an exhortation, which I did; and before we parted he gave me a certificate to exhort." Not long after, Mr. Pedicord sent for Everett to travel as his colleague. "The Lord," he says, "publicly owned and blessed my labors."

To the service of an itinerant Methodist preacher Everett now fully devoted himself, exclaiming:

"In a rapture of joy my life I employ,
The God of my life to proclaim;
'Tis worth living for this, to administer bliss,
And salvation in Jesus's name.

"My remnant of days I spend to his praise,
Who died the whole world to redeem:
Be they many or few, my days are his due,
And they all are devoted to him."

Everett was as valiant a soldier of Christ as he was brave in the army of freedom. He entered into the work of the

* A pious letter of Mr. Pedicord addressed to a young lady, and published in the "Methodist Magazine" of 1798, reveals not only a lovely spirit, but also decided mental capacity and power of expression.

ministry with enthusiasm. He was bold and fearless in preaching. He prophesied not smooth things, but used great plainness of speech. He denounced wickedness. Asbury, in 1788, says: "Our Brother Everett with zeal and boldness cries aloud for liberty—emancipation."

"Everett had all the elements of a powerful pioneer preacher. His frame was robust. He hurled the terrors of the Lord into the midst of Satan's strongholds with irresistible power. He moved among the churches like a flame of fire. He was, indeed, a mighty evangelist, full of faith and the Holy Ghost. He lived in the midst of revivals. His voice rang out over the hosts of Israel like the peal of a trumpet calling to battle.

"Sometimes, before preaching to a large crowd, he would divest himself of his coat and cravat, and then launch forth in a sermon or exhortation that thrilled every heart, and brought sinners by scores and hundreds to their knees. He was ever in the front rank pressing on after the flying foe. Though he was almost fifty years old when he entered the itinerancy, he displayed all the ardor of youth, and his vigorous constitution bore him through twenty-five years of active service." *

A curious incident in the history of Everett illustrates how providentially provision was made sometimes for the sustenance of the old itinerants. A lady related to the Rev. Henry Boehm that when she saw Mr. Everett coming to her house one day, she was glad, but was also much mortified because she had nothing to cook for his dinner. She lived on Hooper's Island, and markets were not readily accessible. Going into the yard for some wood to make a fire, something fell at her feet. It proved to be a fresh bass weighing several pounds. On looking up she saw a large hawk upon the wing which had taken the fish from the bay, and finding it too heavy to carry had dropped it just where it was needed. She at once prepared it

* Bennett's "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia," pp. 228, 229.

for the table, and Mr. Everett enjoyed the meal exceedingly.*

Worn down by years and labor Everett retired in 1804. In April, 1806, Asbury says: "I saw Joseph Everett, feeble but faithful, in patient waiting for his Lord." In 1809 he writes: "Father Everett has gone in glory to glory." The Minutes say: "In the same moment, his life, his breath, and his shouts were hushed in the silence of death." He died October 16, 1809.

JONATHAN FORREST.

Mr. Forrest was nearly thirty-one years of age when, as a member of the Christmas Conference, he participated in the work of organizing the American Methodist Church. It was his privilege to live almost fifty-nine years thereafter, and to see the Church, which in that historic assembly he helped to found, increase from about fifteen thousand members to about a million, and from about a hundred to over four thousand traveling preachers. Who could have dreamed that a member of that Conference, then more than a score and ten years old, would witness, ere he closed his career, a result so stupendous? Yet that wonderful realization was permitted to Mr. Forrest.

Jonathan Forrest was born in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, February 28, 1754. He had come to manhood when the Revolution began. He was converted under the labors of the early itinerants soon after Asbury came to the country, about the year 1772. He became a member of the first Methodist class formed in his county. At an early period he began his public labors. He first appears in the Minutes in 1781 as remaining on trial. He performed nearly all his ministerial work in his native State. After he located he lived many years near the spot where Strawbridge built his first church.

* Boehm's Reminiscences, p. 74.

Mr. Forrest was a man of God. From youth to extreme age he maintained a consistent Christian profession, and continued to labor in the pulpit to the close of his long life. His uniformity and temperateness of life were notable. "Perhaps," says one who knew him long and well, "few Christians possessed a more constant and unshaken confidence in God. Hence the cheerful flow of spirits he commonly enjoyed."

He did his share of hard work in the itinerancy, and enjoyed his full share of success. He was a revival preacher, and was eminently effective in leading sinners to God. At the Philadelphia Conference, in 1791, William Colbert speaks of hearing Ezekiel Cooper preach one night, and adds: "Jonathan Forrest gave an exhortation after him. He spoke with life and power."

The Rev. Dr. J. T. Ward, President of Western Maryland College, who became acquainted with Mr. Forrest in 1841, about two years previous to his death, says: "He seemed, notwithstanding his great age, to be in full possession of all his faculties, except that his hearing had somewhat failed him. He talked very freely of his long experience in the ministry, and said: 'You young preachers of to-day know little about hard work. When I was a young man it took three months to get around the circuit, and we had very few rest days. We preached almost daily during most of the year, and much of the time in private houses, barns, etc. We had some rough scenes to pass through, but many a happy time for all that. It was quite common in my early ministry to hear responses from the congregation, "Amen!" and "That's God's truth;" or, on the part of the wicked, "That's a lie!" even sometimes accompanying the remark with an oath.'"

Mr. Forrest, like Garrettson and others, suffered persecution in the ministry. The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper says: "In the city of Annapolis, the capital of the State, Jonathan Forrest, William Wren, and, I believe, at different times

two or three others, were committed to jail." * After all his sufferings and toils Forrest, at the sunset of his life, said: "I have done what I could, but it was nothing—nothing."

Mr. Forrest was eminently orthodox and scriptural as a theologian and preacher. He would advance no doctrine without supporting it with Scripture. "His sermons consisted chiefly of Scripture quotations, of which he had the most perfect command of any man I ever knew. Herein lay his great strength. He laid no claim to excellency of speech, or the wisdom of man, but was, in the proper sense of the word, an able minister of the New Testament." † The Rev. Dr. Ward says that less than two years before his death "Father Forrest preached during our protracted meeting at Uniontown. The sermon was full of Scripture quotations. It occupied about half an hour, and produced a powerful effect."

Mr. Forrest retired finally from the itinerant service in 1805. He, however, continued to labor. His diligence and punctuality in preaching after he ceased to travel were marked. His appointments, says Mr. Henkel "were always ahead, for he reserved to himself but a small number of his Sabbaths to attend the ministry of his brethren. If he failed at any time, it was because of something more than light inclemency of weather, or slight indisposition of person." Dr. Ward says: "It was reported, I presume upon good authority, that the dear old servant of God had preached ten miles distant from his home the Lord's day before he died. It was such a statement as I could well believe from what I knew of his persevering fidelity to his Master's cause."

When the controversy concerning the admission of the laity to the governing councils of the Church became rife, Mr. Forrest took the side of the Reformers. About 1828

* Cooper on Asbury, p. 86.

† The Rev. Eli Henkle, in the "Methodist Protestant."

or 1829 he withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church and united with the Methodist Protestant Church, in whose fellowship he died.

The end of this saintly veteran is described by the Rev. E. Henkel: "It seems that soon after his return from one of his Sabbath appointments he was assailed by a most painful complaint, which bade defiance to the physician who attended him. His sufferings were endured with becoming Christian fortitude and resignation to the divine will, particularly toward the last. I had the pleasure of seeing him twice in his illness, and inquired each time into the state of his mind and prospects of future bliss, to which his answers were entirely satisfactory. He had no doubts, no fears. His way was clear, and his prospects bright. His speech had so failed him at my last interview, the day before he died, that he could only whisper, yet his language was the same as before. All was well. While sitting in his chair he fell asleep in Jesus." His death occurred October 12, 1843.

FREEBORN GARRETTSON.

Mr. Garrettson was born in Maryland, June 15, 1752. During his youth he had religious impressions, "and frequently read, prayed, and wept." Francis Asbury's preaching moved him. He says: "I went to hear him one evening. The place was crowded. He had not preached long before I sensibly felt the word, and his doctrine seemed as salve to a festering wound. I heard him with delight and, bathed in tears, could have remained there till the rising of the sun, the time passed so sweetly away. I was greatly astonished to find a person go on so fluently without his sermon before him. I returned home with gladness, fully persuaded that he was a servant of God, and that he preached in a way I had not heard before. I followed him to another preaching place, and, fixing my attentive eye upon him, I found him to be a workman that

need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word. He began to wind about me in such a manner that I found my sins in clusters, as it were, around me, and the law in its purity probing to the very bottom and discovering the defects of my heart. I was ready to cry out, 'How does this stranger know me so well!' After the sermon was ended I wished not to speak to any one, but returned home with my mind very solemnly affected."

Garrettson continued to hear the Methodist preachers occasionally, and in June, 1775, he submitted to God in Christ, and henceforth was a devoted follower of the Lamb. Awhile after his conversion he fell into despondency. The face of his Lord was concealed. His soul was in darkness. "I fasted and prayed," he says, "till I was almost reduced to a skeleton; but did not open my mouth to any one. I was sinking into desperation." As he was conducting family worship on a Sunday morning his mind was powerfully impressed that he ought to liberate his slaves. "It is not right for you to keep your fellow-creatures in bondage; you must let the oppressed go free," was suggested forcibly. He says: "I knew it to be that same blessed voice which had spoken to me before. Till then I had never suspected that the practice of slave-keeping was wrong; I had not read a book on the subject nor been told so by any. I paused a minute, and then replied: 'Lord, the oppressed shall go free.' And I was as clear of them in my mind as if I had never owned one. I told them they did not belong to me, and that I did not desire their services without compensation. I was now at liberty to proceed in worship. After singing I kneeled to pray. Had I the tongue of an angel I could not fully describe what I felt. All my dejection and that melancholy gloom which preyed upon me vanished in a moment. A divine sweetness ran through my whole frame. O, in what a wonderful manner was my poor soul let into the depths of my Redeemer's love!

"In the forenoon I attended church; * but I could not find what I wanted. In the afternoon I went to hear the Methodists, and something told me, 'These are the people.' I was so happy in time of preaching that I could conceal it no longer. So I determined to choose God's people for my people, and returned home rejoicing."

Garrettson now began to visit his friends and neighbors to converse with them about religion and pray with them. Soon his lips were opened in public exhortation. He was zealous and affectionate, full of tenderness and kindness, even in the midst of opposition and severe provocation. His efforts to save others were successful. He says: "With many tears I testified of the goodness of God; appointed evening meetings in my own and in other private houses. Under my first public discourse several were awakened, and the second time I opened my mouth to speak at one of my evening meetings about twenty poor sinners were cut to the heart, and some fell to the floor and cried for mercy. The power of the Lord was manifested, and he soon gave me a happy society in that place."

Of course such a convert was soon in the itinerancy. "In May, 1776," he says, "a Conference was to be held in Baltimore. With humble resignation to what I believed to be the will of God I repaired to the place, made an offering of myself and of my services to the itinerant cause, passed through an examination before the little Conference, was accepted, received a license from Mr. Rankin, and was sent out on the Frederick Circuit."

Freeborn Garrettson was one of the most effective itinerants of his time. The secret of his success was his fidelity to his trust and the unction that he bore. It is of him, no doubt, that Asbury speaks in 1779, when he says: "Brother G——n exhorted long; his speaking is mostly proposing cases of conscience and answering them, and speaking about Christ, heaven, and hell; yet this carries all before

* Garrettson was reared under the influence of the English Church.

it. It is incredible the good he has been instrumental in doing. The people are generally moved under his preaching." Again, in 1780, Asbury said: "Freeborn Garrettson spoke in his usual plainness as to matter and manner, but it moved the people greatly."

Garrettson was earnestly in pursuit of souls. Mr. Asbury traveled with him to Virginia in 1780, when the effort was made successfully to arrest the division occasioned by the difference concerning the sacraments. Asbury says: "Set out in company with Brother Garrettson. Rode near forty miles. Lodged at Garratt's tavern, where we were well entertained. Brother Garrettson talked to the landlord on the subject of religion, and prayed with him at night and in the morning, though he would not consent to call his family together. Brother Garrettson will let no one escape a religious lecture that comes in his way. Sure he is faithful; but what am I?"

Dr. Coke met Garrettson on his arrival, in the fall of 1784, at Dover, Delaware. Coke says: "Here I met with an excellent young man, Freeborn Garrettson. It was this young man who joined himself to Mr. Asbury during the dreadful dispute concerning the ordinances and bore down all before him. He seems to be all meekness and love and yet all activity. He makes me quite ashamed, for he invariably rises at four o'clock in the morning, and not only he, but several other of the preachers; and now blushing, I brought back my alarm to four o'clock." *

Garrettson suffered persecution for the sake of the Gospel. "The Methodists," he says, "were a small and despised people, and the wicked, as a pretext for their base conduct, falsely branded them with the name of Tories. I was pursued by the wicked, knocked down, and left almost dead on the highway; my face scarred and bleeding. This was humiliating to me, but it was loud preaching to the people. I did not court persecution, but I gloried in the

* Coke's Journal in American "Arminian Magazine."

Cross of Christ my Lord. They imprisoned me in Cambridge, but after detaining me about sixteen days they willingly released me, for I suppose my imprisonment was the means of my doing more good in those few days than I otherwise should have done in treble the time."

Not only did he encounter cruel people, but ignorant as well. He says of a place in Maryland: "I suppose the people in this part of the country had scarce heard any kind of preaching, and knew no more about the new birth than the Indians. I met a man one day, and asked him if he was acquainted with Jesus Christ. 'Sir,' said he, 'I know not where the man lives.' Lest he should have misunderstood me, I repeated it again—and he answered, 'I know not the man.'"

Garrettson was sent abroad to summon the preachers to the Christmas Conference. From that Conference, as we have seen, he went as a missionary to Nova Scotia. The nature and results of his work there are indicated by the following sketch, written in 1840, by the Rev. Elbert Osborn: "I have just been to pay a short religious visit to a Christian pilgrim more than three-score and ten years old. With great pleasure I listened to a very short account of the dealings of God with her soul. More than fifty years since God sent his servant, Freeborn Garrettson, to preach Jesus in Nova Scotia. At that time the aged pilgrim I have just visited resided in Shelburne, Nova Scotia. Passing along the street one day she saw a man standing on a rock with a company of people around him. Curiosity led her to draw near, and she heard Mr. Garrettson preach from these words, 'Upon this rock I will build my Church.' By the blessing of God upon that sermon she was awakened to a sense of her lost condition, and after being under conviction about two years, she was brought into the enjoyment of the love of God in a class-meeting, while a Methodist missionary from England was praying for her.

"By the providence of God her residence was removed

from Shelburne to Connecticut, where she and her pious husband for many years entertained the Methodist preachers. During about twenty years their house was a place where these men of God preached. 'Have you ever been weary of serving the Lord?' I asked. 'O no,' said she, 'it seems to grow better and better.' How encouraging to find the fruit of the labors of a father in the Gospel still remaining while his happy spirit is rejoicing before the throne." *

When Garrettson returned from Nova Scotia he was sent, in 1787, to preside over a district in the Peninsula. After about a year Asbury directed him to go to Boston, to plant the new Church in the Pilgrims' land. He got as far as New York. There the necessities of the work detained him until Conference. "Conference commenced," he says. "Many petitions for preachers were sent in from new places, and it pleased the Lord to thrust out an unusual number of young men in the New York Conference, more than we had regular places for, and our venerable Father Asbury requested me to take charge of them, and to do the best I could. I was very uneasy in my mind, being unacquainted with the country and an entire stranger to its inhabitants, there being no Methodists higher than Westchester. I gave myself to earnest prayer for direction. I know that the Lord was with me. In the night season, in a dream, it seemed as if the whole country up the North River as far as Lake Champlain, east and west, was open to my view.

"After the Conference rose I requested the young men to meet me. Light seemed so reflected on my path that I gave them directions where to begin and which way to form their circuits. I also appointed the time for each quarterly meeting, requested them to make a collection at every place where they preached, and told them that I should go up the North River to the extreme parts of the

* "Christian Advocate and Journal," March 20, 1840.

work, visiting the towns and cities on my way; and on my return I should visit them all and hold their quarterly meetings. I felt no doubt that the Lord would do wonders, for the young men were pious, zealous, and laborious.

"Accordingly, on my return, I found my expectation fully answered. The Lord was with them, and began a good work in every place. Their little salaries were nearly made up the first quarter, and before winter they all had comfortable circuits. One circumstance I shall not soon forget. As I passed down a gentleman overtook me, and, after the usual salutation, asked me if I had heard the news. 'I understand,' said he, 'that the king of England has sent over to this country a great many ministers to disaffect the people. He intends to bring on another war. I fear it is too true, for as I have come down from Lake Champlain I hear of them every-where, preaching night and day, and I hear they have many followers.' I told him that I could explain that subject to him; that I was one of the men. After some conversation he seemed satisfied and much affected. We mingled many tears with our precious seed in the formation of the New York Conference. I may say we labored faithfully night and day, and, blessed be God! we saw the rising glory of the Church." *

A Methodist historian states that the first year of Garrettson's work in this new field resulted in the formation of six circuits, extending from New Rochelle to Lake Champlain. "One of his nine young men was Darius Dunham, a name afterward celebrated in Canada." †

Dr. Coke mentions the success of Mr. Garrettson in this important enterprise. The doctor says, in his Journal, in 1789: "On the 28th [of May] we opened our Conference in New York for that State, a Conference like the others, all peace and concord. Glory, glory be to God! In this city we have a great revival and a great increase, in consequence

* Garrettson's Semi-Centennial Sermon.

† "Case and His Contemporaries," by John Carroll, vol. i, p. 6.

of which we are going to build a second church.* In the country parts of this State Freeborn Garrettson, one of our presiding elders, has been greatly blessed, and is endued with an uncommon talent for opening new places. With a set of inexperienced but zealous youths he has not only carried our work in this State as high as Lake Champlain, but has raised congregations in most of the States of New England, and also in the little State of Vermont, within about a hundred miles of Montreal. The members in the State of New York are 2,004; the increase, 900. The whole number in the United States is 43,265; the whole increase, 6,114, which is very great considering that not more than eight months have elapsed since the last Conference. Of the above number, 35,021 are whites, 8,241 are blacks, and three are Indians." †

Mr. Garrettson attended the first General Conference which convened after the organization of the Church. In that Conference he stood with O'Kelly and other leaders of the denomination in the advocacy of such a restriction of the power of the Bishop as was contended for in that memorable controversy. He, however, was loyal to the Church, and bowed submissively to the decision of the majority.

Mr. Garrettson married the daughter of Judge Livingston, a lady of prominent social position, June 30, 1793. Dr. Bangs says she was "every way qualified to be to him 'a helpmeet indeed,' and whose pious efforts to promote the Redeemer's kingdom were ever after, during his life, affectionately united with those of her devoted husband." In relation to this change in his state, Garrettson said: "Lord, we are thine! Thou hast united our spirits to thyself and to each other. Do with us as seemeth thee good, only let us be wholly thine. Let us live

* This was at the close of the ministerial work of John Dickins in the city of New York.

† Coke's "Journals," London, 1793, pp. 113, 114.

to thy glory, and grant that our union may be for the furtherance of each other in the way to the kingdom of heaven."

At Rhinebeck, on the Hudson, a family mansion was established in which piety and hospitality shone forth. The Garrettson homestead became widely known. It was "dedicated to God from its foundation," and the pious of all denominations enjoyed its Christian fellowship and generous welcome. Mr. Garrettson continued still to toil in the vineyard.

After filling a large place in American Methodism, and contributing, perhaps, as much as any of the fathers of the young Church to its power and its progress, save Asbury, this devoted servant of God and of mankind, in the fullness of years, came to the end. His daughter wrote of the closing scene: "His sufferings at times were unutterable; but through them all were manifested a resignation and fortitude which no agony could destroy. 'I shall be purified as by fire; I shall be made perfect through sufferings; it is all right, all right; not a pain too much,' he would often say. Toward the last his strength was so much exhausted that articulation became a painful effort; but he would often, in a feeble voice, say: 'I want to go home; I want to be with Jesus; I want to be with Jesus.' He said, a short time before his death: 'I feel the perfect love of God in my soul.' A day or two before his departure I heard him say: 'And I shall see Mr. Wesley, too.' *

"He had resigned his wife and daughter into the hand of God, and so great was his desire to depart and be with Christ, that parting with us was disarmed of its bitterness. His last sentence, spoken even in death, was: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!' After that, though he lingered many hours, he could not

* Mr. Garrettson enjoyed Mr. Wesley's confidence, and corresponded with him.

speak articulately. Once only, clasping his hands and raising his eyes to heaven, he uttered, 'Glory! glory!'" Thus Freeborn Garrettson, on the 26th day of September, 1827, passed into the heavens.

WILLIAM GILL.

Mr. Gill was one of the ablest representatives of Methodism in America. He possessed such mental attributes as made him conspicuous in the young Church. He was a native of Delaware. He joined the itinerancy in the stirring days of the Revolution. He was one of the number who were promoted to the order of elder at the Christmas Conference. His character and standing in the ministry are abundantly attested by his fellow-laborers. Freeborn Garrettson says: "William Gill was a man of remarkably strong mind, and although called from the tailor's board, before he had traveled eight years he might be accounted a learned man. Especially had he improved himself in theology and philosophy. He entered the traveling connection in 1777. He was great in prayer. His petitions seemed to wing their way to heaven. In his sermons he was deep and spiritual; and had he possessed the voice and utterance of some men, his celebrity would have been great. He was about the middle size, paid very little attention to his dress, and at first sight was rather diminutive in his appearance. His good sense, usefulness, and piety called for great respect from those who knew him. He displayed so much wisdom and such a profusion of excellent matter in his discourses as greatly surprised those who had judged of him merely from personal appearance." *

Jesse Lee gave the following tribute to his fallen comrade: "From the long acquaintance I had with Mr. Gill, and knowing his public and private worth, I am led to con-

* Semi-Centennial Sermon.

clude that we had scarcely a preacher left among us to equal the deceased, either in knowledge or in goodness. Indeed, I knew of no one who had such a depth of knowledge, both of men and things, as he possessed. His company was agreeable and his conversation entertaining. His preaching was with wisdom and animation, and he proved the goodness of his doctrine by the goodness of his life." * Thomas Ware says of Gill: "In conversation, when an opportunity was enjoyed to ask questions, I have seldom, if ever, known his equal." Ware terms him "the philosophic Gill." He fell at his post, and fell a victor. "After delivering a full testimony for his Savour with his own fingers he closed his eyes in death, proclaiming, 'All is well.'" †

It is said that the distinguished Dr. Rush, who was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was an admirer of the intelligence and ability of Mr. Gill. Lednum says: "On a certain occasion he lay sick at Mr. Manly's, in Philadelphia, and was attended by Dr. Rush. The doctor became very favorably impressed, not only with the piety, but also with the strong and well-cultivated mind of his patient, which led him afterward to defend Methodist preachers against the charge of ignorance. Being in company with a number of gentlemen who were uttering their philippics against the reputed enthusiasm of the Methodists and the ignorance of their teachers, preaching without a regular education, the doctor replied, with this parody: 'I say unto you, gentlemen, that except ye become even as a tailor, ye shall not enter the kingdom of science.'"

The Rev. David Dailey says of Gill: "The Methodist Connection had few to equal him; and it is said that the late Dr. Rush used to call him the greatest divine he ever heard. But though he did not live unseen nor die unla-

* "Lee's "History of the Methodists."

† Lednum's "Rise of Methodism."

mented, there is not a stone to tell where he lies. In a solitary place, beside that of John Smith, equally neglected, is the grave of William Gill. It was pointed out to me a few years ago by the Rev. Thomas Smith." * Gill's grave is near Chestertown, Maryland.

WILLIAM GLENDENNING.

Between this man and the preachers of the Christmas Conference whom we have already contemplated, there is a contrast. The Rev. Henry Boehm says: "He was a Scotchman, a man of rather large stature, and had something of a brogue. Mr. Glendenning was remarkably eccentric, if not a little 'cracked.' I knew him very early, having seen him at my father's house and heard him preach."

Mr. Glendenning, though a member of the Conference which organized the Church, was subsequently opposed to its polity. He was considered unsound in intellect. The Rev. Jesse Lee says of him: "By some means he lost his reason." He published his "Life" in Philadelphia, in 1795, in which, among other things, he says: "I stopped traveling in the month of June, 1785." He also says: "When I would be in the fields I would for hours together be blaspheming in the most horrid manner." Lee says Glendenning "wrote to the General Conference in 1792, wishing to be united with us. The Conference believed him to be beside himself at that time, and would not receive him."

We get a final view of Mr. Glendenning from Mr. Boehm, who says that at a Conference at Raleigh, in February, 1811, "for three nights Bishop Asbury, Thomas L. Douglass, and myself lodged with our aged friend, Rev. William Glendenning, who came and insisted that we should put up with him. He was one of our earliest preachers, having been received at the Conference held in 1776, when there

*Dailey's "Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Smith," 1848.

were only nineteen Methodist preachers in America. This made him to me an object of great interest. His first appointment was Brunswick, Virginia, with George Shadford, Edward Dromgoole, and Robert Williams. He joined the Republican Methodists, under James O'Kelly, and preached among them; then he became a Unitarian, and built a church in Releigh. We had a very pleasant time at his house. He attended our Conference and the preaching, and appeared interested in the revival scenes, but he would exclaim, 'I do not like the government.' There seemed to be a conflict in his own mind. He believed the work to be of God, and yet he was so strongly prejudiced against our Church government that he could not see how heaven had set its seal of approbation on such measures. At this time he was an old man. He ended his days at Releigh." *

LEMUEL GREEN.

Lemuel Green was born in Maryland in the year 1751. He was converted and joined the Methodists about the beginning of the Revolutionary War. He was in his thirtieth year when he began to preach. His name first appears in the Minutes of the year 1783, when he was sent to Yadkin Circuit.

As an itinerant, he endured a large share of privation and suffering. He located in 1800 and settled in Philadelphia, where he continued to reside. In 1823 he was readmitted to the Philadelphia Conference, but did not enter the regular work. In the "Life of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson" there is a notice of a visit which Mr. Garrettson made to Philadelphia, in the winter of 1817–18, in which the following passage occurs: "He rode to Philadelphia and put up at Mr. Lemuel Green's, a located minister, who had traveled and preached until he was worn down,

* Boehm's Reminiscences.

but whose Christian hospitality invited the servants of God under his peaceful roof." Those two itinerant heroes, who sat together in the Christmas Conference thirty three years before, were doubtless refreshed with each other's society, and thrilled with the old enthusiasm, as they reviewed the scenes and achievements of the vanished days. Mr. Green was in the mercantile business in Philadelphia, where he gained considerable wealth.

Wakeley says he "was a most sterling man, and an able minister of the New Testament." * With Thomas Morrell and George Strabeck he was stationed in the city of New York in 1792. The Minutes say of Mr. Green that "he was a clear, sound, and useful preacher, not destitute of the graces of sermonizing, but more abundantly characterized by the unction and power of the Holy Spirit."

Dr. Bangs says of him: "In 1785 we find him in the Alleghany Circuit, at that time a new region of country, but rapidly filling up with inhabitants. He continued his labors in various places, sometimes filling the office of presiding elder, until 1800." In the local relation he preached much, generally every Sabbath. "His heart and house were ever open to receive his brethren, and he always made them welcome to his hospitable table."

Dr. Bangs says, further, that had Mr. Green "continued exclusively devoted to the work of the ministry, instead of departing from it to 'serve tables,' he, doubtless, would have shone much brighter, and diffused his light much more extensively among his fellow-men. But, having become the head of a family, and feeling the pressure so common to itinerant ministers in those days, arising from the scanty support afforded them, he thought it his duty to exchange a traveling for a located ministry. He acquired a competency for a season, yet he was, a few years before his death, reduced to poverty. His declining days were overcast with temporal affliction. Whether in prosperity

* "Lost Chapters," p. 385.

or adversity, he maintained his integrity, exemplifying the virtues of humility and patience in an eminent degree." *

Mr. Green's end was that of the perfect man—peace. "In his last sickness his mind enjoyed heavenly composure; and, having before honored his Saviour in the 'labor of love,' he now glorified him by the 'patience of hope,' and the triumph of faith." †

JOHN HAGERTY.

Mr. Hagerty was born in Prince George County, Virginia, February 18, 1747. In childhood he had serious impressions. At the age of twelve years he experienced meltings of heart in reading the account of the sufferings of Jesus, and often thought that, were Christ then upon earth, he would forsake father and mother and follow him. His early compunctions and aspirations did not at once result, however, in a vital and established faith.

In 1771 John King preached in the town of Hagerty's residence. He heard him three times. The third sermon was effectual in his awakening. He resolved upon a full surrender to God. After some months he was happily converted. King again visited the town in 1772, and formed a society of fourteen, including Mr. Hagerty, of which he afterward became the leader.

Shortly after his conversion the desire that others should become partakers of the same faith led him to labor in the vineyard. Under his second exhortation a man was awakened. This encouraged him, and he soon became engaged in more extended service. He would sometimes spend weeks from home in pursuit of souls.

In 1779 Hagerty joined the itinerancy. He labored in Maryland and in the city of New York. His last station was Baltimore, in 1791 and 1792. The condition of his

* Bangs's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. iv, p. 126.

† Minutes for the year 1832.

wife's health rendered a location imperative, and from Baltimore he retired to a local sphere.

He did not, however, cease his labors as a preacher. "Few men were more cordially disposed to serve the Church. At any hour, night or day, he was at the service of the people. Distance, weather, or season was no consideration with him when duty called. He has been often known to rise from his bed at midnight and ride for miles into the country to visit a sick or a dying man, and that without fee or reward.*

Mr. Hagerty was a successful minister. We have seen how, under his preaching, Thomas Morrell was awakened; and also how, in Annapolis, in 1789–90, he reveled in revival triumphs. He was an able and effective preacher. The year that he was stationed in New York, 1785, he seems to have crossed the Hudson and entered New Jersey. He persuaded Thomas Morrell to join the itinerancy. At his earnest solicitation Morrell left a lucrative business "and commenced preaching in different places, his appointments being made by Mr. Hagerty." One of Morrell's earliest attempts at preaching was "at the house of his uncle, in Chatham, New Jersey. Having been an officer in the Revolution, and for several years subsequently a merchant in Elizabeth, he was widely known, and a very large assembly convened to hear the major preach. This, I think, was his third or fourth effort, and was by himself deemed an utter failure. He then concluded that he was not called of God to preach, and would not make the attempt again. Early the ensuing morning, while at breakfast at his uncle's, there was a knock at the door. A lady entered, desiring to see the preacher of the previous evening. In a few moments another came, and then an old man, upon the same errand, all of whom had been awakened under the sermon deemed by him a failure. They had come to learn the way of salvation more per-

* Memoir, by the Rev. Joshua Soule.

fectly. The doctrine to them was new, they having been brought up under Calvinistic influences. He, of course, recalled his purpose to preach no more, and was encouraged to go forward.

"About this time, such was the excitement all through that part of the State occasioned by Methodist preaching that some of the ministers became alarmed. One of them, advising with an elder brother in the ministry, asked: 'What shall be done to counteract the influence they are exerting?' 'We must outpreach and outpray them.' 'That,' rejoined the other, 'is impossible, for there is Mr. Hagerty. He can split a hair.'" *

Hagerty was a "clear, pointed, and commanding preacher." He had "a manly voice," and the word proclaimed by him "was often made the power of God to the salvation of his hearers. In looking over his manuscript Journal we were much pleased and edified with the fine vein of deep piety which runs through it, and which breathes the spirit of a devoted evangelist." †

This good man finished his course September 4, 1823. On being told that he appeared to be near his end, he answered "Yes, and all is straight. The way is clear before me." "He appeared," says Mr. Soule, "to have heaven in full anticipation. His eyes sparkled, and his whole theme was thanksgiving and praise." Mr. Hagerty was honored by election and ordination to the office of elder at the Christmas Conference.

RICHARD IVEY.

Mr. Ivey was promoted to the eldership at the time of the organization of the Church. The traces of him in the records of the denomination are very slight. While but few facts illustrative of his work are recorded, enough

* Letter of the late Rev. F. A. Morrell to the author.

† The Rev. J. Soule: "Memoir of Hagerty," "Methodist Magazine," 1824.

exist to show that he was one of the foremost men in early Methodism. One of the facts concerning him is that he spent about eighteen years in the itinerancy. Another is that his labors were widely extended. He traveled as far north as New Jersey, and as far south as southern Georgia. Still another fact is that he labored without adequate compensation, inasmuch as the Minutes declare that "exclusive of his patrimony he was indebted at his death." The Minutes also say: "Ivy, a man of affliction, lingered out his latter days, spending his all with his life, in the work."

When Ivey was in New Jersey Thomas Ware, who was then a young Methodist, accompanied him to an appointment where a company of soldiers had resolved to arrest the first preacher who should come to the place. Ware hoped that, as he was acquainted with some of the officers, he would convince them that the preacher was not a foe of the country. Says Ware: "The preacher was Richard Ivey, who was at that time quite young. The rumor of what was about to be done having gone abroad, many of the most respectable inhabitants of the neighborhood were collected at that place. Soon after the congregation were convened, a file of soldiers were marched into the yard and halted at the door. Two officers came in, drew their swords and crossed them on the table, and seated themselves so as to look the preacher full in the face. I watched his eye with great anxiety and soon saw that he was not influenced by fear. His text was, 'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' When he came to enforce the exhortation 'Fear not,' he paused, and said, 'Christians sometimes fear when there is no fear.' And so, he added, he presumed it was with some then present. Those men who were engaged in the defense of their country's rights meant them no harm. He spoke fluently and forcibly in commendation of the cause of freedom from foreign and domestic

tyranny. Looking first on the swords and then in the faces of the officers, and opening his bosom, he said: 'Sirs, I would fain show you my heart. If it beats not high for legitimate liberty may it ever cease to beat!' This he said in such a tone of voice and with such a look as thrilled the whole audience. The countenances of the officers at first wore a contemptuous frown, then a significant smile. They were completely disarmed, hung down their heads, and before the conclusion of this masterly address shook like the leaves of an aspen. Many of the people sobbed aloud, others cried out 'Amen,' while the soldiers without —the doors and windows being open—swung their hats and shouted 'Huzza for the Methodist parson!' On leaving, the officers shook hands with the preacher and wished him well, and afterward said they would share their last shilling with him."

This incident indicates that Mr. Ivey was a man of courage, tact, and eloquence—the kind needed for the delicate and arduous work of building a new Church in the United States. He did not shrink from difficult duties nor shun in any place to declare the counsel of God. The Minutes say that Ivey possessed "quick and solid parts," and Jesse Lee says he "preached with a good degree of animation."

Ivey spent several years in the eldership in the South. With respect to his work in that office in Georgia the historian of the denomination in that State says: "He was the Great Heart of his day, and he braved all the perils of this frontier and bore all the privations his office called for. His district extended from the Savannah to the Oconee, from the St. Mary's to the mountains. When he began his work there was not a single church building in his district. He had seen the membership of the societies quintupled. He extended his line from below Savannah to the borders of the Indian nation. He had only young men, almost without education, to rely upon to aid him. He

had no mission funds, no reserve of ministerial force to bring up. Never had man a more difficult task; not often has man done the work better." *

The fact that Ivey continued so long in the itinerant service, in those early times, shows that he was a Christian hero. He was a native of Sussex County, Virginia, where also he died, in the latter part of the year 1795. It is said that he retired to take care of his mother.

JEREMIAH LAMBERT.

Mr. Lambert was a native of New Jersey. The confidence of the Church in him is shown by the fact that he was passed to elder's orders at the Christmas Conference, and sent alone as a missionary to Antigua, in the West Indies. Dr. Coke speaks of his excellence. We have seen how he braved the hardships and perils of the Tennessee frontier, as the first Methodist preacher in that country.† The seed he there sowed was productive; and since his day Methodism has flourished beyond any other sect in Tennessee. He was "taken from the common walks of life. He had in four years, when the Church was organized, without classical learning or regular theological training, actually attained to an eminence in the pulpit which no ordinary man could reach by the aid of any human means whatever. He was most emphatically a primitive Methodist preacher, preaching out of the pulpit as well as in it. The graces with which he was eminently adorned were intelligence, innocence, and love. These imparted a glow of eloquence to all he said and did." ‡

Lambert died early, but "he yet speaketh." In 1786 the Minutes contain a fine tribute to his worth: "Jeremiah Lambert—an elder. Six years in the work. A man of sound judgment, clear understanding, good gifts, genuine

* Smith's "History of Methodism in Georgia and Florida."

† See page 128 of this volume. ‡ Thomas Ware.

piety, and very useful, humble, and holy, diligent in life, and resigned in death. Much esteemed in the Connection, and justly lamented."

WILLIAM PHŒBUS.

William Phœbus was born in the month of August, 1754, in the State of Maryland. Of his early days, or of the time and circumstances of his conversion, there appears to be no record, save that his conversion was due, under God, to the labors of a Methodist preacher. In 1783 he was admitted on trial as a traveling preacher, and appointed to Frederick Circuit. "After this," says Dr. Bangs, "he traveled in various places, sometimes contending with the difficulties of the new settlements in Green Brier, and other places no less rugged and destitute, where he acquitted himself as a 'good soldier of Jesus Christ,' fighting the battle of the Lord, and conquering souls by the power of Gospel truth." After his location, Bangs says, he preached "generally every Sabbath with good effect." In 1798 he located as a physician in the city of New York. In 1806 he re-entered the work in the New York Conference and was appointed to Albany. In 1808 he was stationed in Charleston, South Carolina. The historian of Methodism in Charleston says, Phœbus "was a man of fine pulpit talents, as he was of handsome personal appearance." * He returned in 1811 to the city of New York. He continued in the effective ranks until the year 1821, when he became a supernumerary. In the fifteen years of his itinerancy previous to his location and employment in another profession, Phœbus performed the severe labor and endured the sacrifices and privations which were required of all the Methodist itinerants in that early period. His vigorous mind found exercise in authorship and editorial work in his later days. He at one time

* Mood's "Methodism in Charleston," p. 109.

published a magazine, and also wrote a defense of Methodist ordination and the "Memoirs of Bishop Whatcoat." The last-named volume, while revealing no special skill in book-making, indicates that the writer possessed intellectual strength. Dr. Phœbus, for almost half a century, maintained the character of a Christian minister.

Dr. Wakeley says: "Dr. Phœbus was a strong man; a bold and independent thinker. There was much originality about him." Wakeley also says "he was very eccentric." Dr. Bangs says he "had acquired a large stock of useful information from his various studies and general intercourse with mankind. His style was plain and perspicuous, his manner solemn and impressive, and he evinced, on all occasions, a mind familiar with the Holy Scriptures and deeply devoted to his work. Having formed some acquaintance with the languages in which the Scriptures were written, he was extremely fond of deciphering the sacred text, and sifting out the exact scope and design of the writer."

Dr. Phœbus had practical sagacity. He well understood human nature. He was skillful in administration, and successful in adjusting difficulties that arose from misunderstanding and antagonisms.

He was a good hater of what is sometimes called sensationalism in the pulpit. Once, on being asked how some preachers, without much solidity of character or mind, succeeded in attracting so much attention, he, with a contemptuous air, replied, "Pugh! If I were to pull off my old boot and throw it up into the air, and cry, Hurrah! Hurrah! I should soon collect around me a more numerous crowd than any man in the city."

He was fond of Baxter, and gathered many of his pious utterances in his memory, which, when occasion required, he would employ in defense of his theological positions, together with arguments derived from Wesley and Fletcher. He was adroit in maintaining his side of a controversy.

Phœbus, from his reading, extensive travels, and intercourse with men, had gained a store of anecdote with which he gave interest and instruction to his conversation.

As a preacher, he was highly evangelical. He gloried in the Cross. He set forth Christ, the Redeemer, in all his offices as a Saviour. Whenever he mentioned the name of Jesus he would gently incline his head, and if covered, lift the hat and use the prefix "adorable" thus, the "adorable Jesus." His discourses were gemmed with the names of the Saviour of the world, and he proclaimed him as the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and the Morning Star, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.

He could scarcely be called a popular preacher, in the ordinary sense of that term. This, however, was the result rather of a lack of attractiveness of manner than of deficiency in the quality of his matter. His sermons were characterized by solidity, and, says Dr. Bangs, "he certainly commanded the respectful attention of the more weighty part of the community."

In his public addresses and in conversation he would employ "pointed apothegms and short enigmas not easily comprehended by the mass, and often perplexing to the thoughtful. As an instance of his enigmatical manner of speaking the following may be mentioned: At the Conference of 1823, when addressing his brethren on the improbability of his being able to serve the Church much longer, he remarked 'that the lease of his house had expired, and therefore he could not tell how soon he might be called to remove, as he was not certain that he could procure a renewal of his lease for any particular length of time; hence he could not pledge himself for any special service in the ministry.'

"On hearing this, an aged minister, and one by no means deficient in mental sagacity, said to the writer of this, 'I thought the doctor owned the house in which he lives; but it seems I was under a mistake, as he says that

the time of his lease is out.' To this it was replied, 'You do not understand him. He speaks in parables. He is now three-score years and ten, the common age God has allotted to man, and therefore he cannot calculate on living much longer at most, and even that little time must be considered as an act of God's grace over and above what he usually grants to man.' This, indeed, was his meaning from his subsequent explanation." *

The Minutes say: "William Phœbus was a man of great integrity of character, uniformly pious, deeply read in the Scriptures, and a sound, experimental, practical preacher. In his last sickness he manifested the virtues of a Christian in a high degree, being remarkably patient and submissive under his sufferings, and expressing, with great cheerfulness, his prospects of future blessedness." His death occurred in the city of New York the 9th of November, 1831. His brethren say: "He sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, in the seventy-eighth year of his age."

IGNATIUS PIGMAN.

Mr. Pigman joined the itinerancy in 1780, and located in 1788 to provide for his family. It has been said that he was the Apollos of early Methodism. While in the ranks he did valuable work. Dr. Coke thus speaks of him when on one of his visits to this country:

"I met," says Coke, "with Brother Ignatius Pigman, one of our elders, who had been a little before in Kentucky, on the other side of the Appalachian Mountains. In coming back he had a party with him, who were also on their return. Having some business to transact, he left his party, intending to follow and overtake them: and imagining that they had proceeded before him, and knowing that they were well stocked with provisions, he took with him only two pounds of dried venison, and a proportionate quantity of biscuits.

* Bangs's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. iv, pp. 131, 132.

It may be here necessary to observe that the Americans, in peopling the Western territory, which now forms the States of Kentucky and Tennessee, had passed over a great quantity of the wilderness, for the sake of the richer soil, which lay more toward the west; so that a vast tract of forest lay between the old and new settlements. The party before mentioned had about two hundred miles to travel through this wilderness, in the line they designed to take. Poor Mr. Pigman lost his company, who stayed behind longer than they at first intended, and afterward lost his way by taking a line which inclined too much to the left. Eleven days he rode and subsisted on small quantities of his biscuits and venison, till at last the whole was expended. His horse was supported by the grass in the woods, till, at the expiration of the eleven days, the poor creature sunk under his fatigue, and Mr. Pigman was obliged to leave him behind him. For five days more he traveled on foot, carrying his saddle-bags on his shoulder or his arm; and at last, to his great joy, came to a plantation, where his kind hostess, a widow, supplied him with necessary food. By this time his clothes were so torn that he was hardly decent, and the last day his throat was so sore that he could scarcely swallow water. Twice he met with a wild bear. Each time he turned round and looked firmly at the bear; the bear stopped, and soon turned away. One night, toward the close of his dreadful journey, he was lying down, resting his head on his saddle-bags, which were his pillow all the way, and of a sudden heard a rustling noise, and could clearly distinguish the footsteps of a man. He had no doubt but he was an Indian, and being confident that he was not far from the cultivated country, he lay quiet till the noise was over, and then fell asleep. I reflected, What have been any of my sufferings in comparison of these!"

The oratorical gifts of Mr. Pigman must have been remarkable. Traditions of his eloquence were long current.

A writer in the "Wesleyan Repository," in 1822, gave the following reminiscences of his oratory: "Ignatius Pigman, one of the early Methodist preachers, was a natnral, rather than a self-taught, orator. At one period of his life he became obnoxious to a considerable degree of public prejudice and censure; yet at that very time in his native place, surrounded by his greatest opposers, such was the power of his eloquence that he could work upon their feelings in a manner which confounded them. His surviving hearers to this day give him the precedence of all other speakers. There seems to be sufficient evidence to induce us to place him among the great natural orators who have appeared in different ages and countries. Men, women, and children, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, can all relate anecdotes of the effect of Mr. Pigman's preaching. Pigman was once preaching on the commons in Baltimore, and in illustrating the joys of a converted penitent he introduced a sailor who, after a long and tempestuous voyage, descries land. A sailor, who was lying on the grass, sprang up and cried out in his wonted tone, 'Land ho!' It is highly probable that if the consciousness of his mighty energies, as is too often the case, had not allured him from the closet, he might have escaped all the misfortunes of his life, and left a record among the foremost on the rolls of fame."

Thomas Ware has recorded the following tribute: "Caleb Boyer and Ignatius Pigman, who commenced traveling in 1780, located in 1788. These were reckoned among the first preachers. It is presumed that there were few in any age or country who could extemporize with either of these primitive Methodist missionaries. When Whatcoat and Vasey heard them, at the Christmas Conference, they said they had not heard their equal in the British Connection, except Wesley and Fletcher. These men, who copied, with great fidelity and exactness, the example of humility and self-devotion set by the Apostle of the Gentiles, were

held in high estimation. It was, accordingly, a matter of much grief when they abandoned the itinerant ranks."

It is understood that Mr. Pigman became a lawyer. In that capacity he defended the Rev. Jacob Gruber in his trial upon the charge of having sought to incite slaves to insurrection in a sermon he preached at a camp-meeting. Mr. Gruber was acquitted. Of Mr. Pigman's later history we are ignorant.

FRANCIS POYTHRESS.

Of Mr. Poythress's early years little is known. He was born about the year 1745. He, probably, was a native of Virginia, where he was converted in his early manhood. He inherited a considerable estate and became dissipated. He was led to repentance by the conversation and reproof of a lady of elevated position in society. He began to read the Bible and to pray in secret. He sought a religious guide, but, such was the character of the clergy in Virginia at that day, he found none. He heard of the Rev. Deveraux Jarratt and obtained his counsel. He remained for some time with Mr. Jarratt, and at length obtained the forgiveness and peace he sought. He was moved to proclaim the Saviour he had found, and quickly went forth to preach. This was before he became acquainted with the Methodists. In one of his evangelical journeys he met a Methodist preacher, who furnished him the means of becoming acquainted with Methodism. As a result, he united with the Methodists and joined the primitive itinerant band. He became a Methodist preacher in 1775, under the authority of a quarterly meeting in Brunswick Circuit, Virginia. His name appears in the Minutes of 1776. "Henceforth," says Dr. Redford, "in North Carolina, Maryland, and Kentucky, he was to be a representative man of the struggling cause. In 1783 he bore its standard across the Alleghanies to the waters of the Youghiogheny. From 1786 he served it

with pre-eminent success as a presiding elder. Asbury nominated him for the episcopate, in a letter addressed to the Conference, at Wilbraham, in 1797. The preachers refused to comply with the request simply upon the ground that it was not competent in a yearly Conference to elect Bishops. Poythress was to the South-west what Jesse Lee was to New England—an apostle."

Mr. Poythress was of about medium height and of stout frame. In 1788 he was appointed to superintend the work in Kentucky. Thenceforth, until his itinerancy ceased, he was a voice crying in the wilderness. To Kentucky he gave nearly all his remaining years. There he presided at the Conferences and stationed the preachers when Asbury was absent. He saw the importance of education, and, as we have seen, labored to establish the Bethel school in the new State.

Asbury was a judge of men, and the work he assigned to Poythress, together with the fact that he desired him to share the labors and honors of the episcopate, shows how he estimated his capacity and his worth. It is said that the administrative abilities of Poythress were great. He had the bearing of a well-bred gentleman. He was remarkable for his gift in prayer, but his talents as a preacher were not extraordinary.

We have seen that a cloud settled upon the life of this brave and devoted itinerant. For some time while he prosecuted his work he showed a degree of mental disturbance. The exposures and hardships of his life in the wilderness, in connection with a melancholy tendency of mind, may have destroyed his cerebral equilibrium. At any rate he was driven from the field by insanity, and William M'Kendree, who was sent by Asbury from Virginia to take his place, was thereby introduced to the West. Mr. Poythress retired from his labors about 1800. He died insane at the house of his sister, Mrs. Prior, about twelve miles from Lexington, Kentucky, in or near 1818.

NELSON REED.

Nelson Reed was one of the heroes of the old itinerancy. In defiance of hardship, scarcity, and persecution, he went forth as a herald of grace to the perishing. An aged man in western Pennsylvania, while sitting in the porch of his dwelling a great while ago with a minister, asked the latter if he knew Nelson Reed. The answer was, "Yes." The old man pointed to a small house with but one diminutive window and said: "In that house we used to put him at night and then guard him in order to protect him from the Indians, and afterward used to accompany him over these mountains from appointment to appointment, armed with our rifles. Where you are accompanied now by friends without fearing aught, then we were obliged to protect the preachers with gun from the scalping-knife of the savage. Where you have boat and bridge to aid you in crossing streams and rivers, they were compelled to make boat and bridge of their horses' backs, and were often beaten down before they reached the opposite shore."

Nelson Reed was born in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, about the middle of the eighteenth century. Dr. Roberts says: "He stated on the word of his father he believed himself to have been born November 27, 1751. Several circumstances go to corroborate this date as the true one." According to the parish register, however, his birth occurred November 28, 1753.

In his childhood he removed to Virginia. His name first appears in the Minutes of the Conference in 1779. His ministry, however, began some years earlier. The late Dr. Roberts, of Baltimore, learned from Mr. Reed, shortly before his last illness, that he commenced his itinerant work in June, 1775, on Amelia Circuit, Virginia.

Mr. Reed, therefore, was an early laborer in the field of Methodism. He was among the first of that noble band of sowers who went forth weeping, and bearing the

"precious seed" which has been so wonderfully productive in America. He sowed not only with tears, but amid persecution. In 1781 he traveled Calvert Circuit, in Maryland. "The first round," says Dr. Roberts, "he made on this circuit he called at the house of a gentleman near Friendship, and requested permission to preach under two large oak-trees that stood upon his ground near the Cross Roads. The owner at first refused, because he feared Reed and his colleagues had some design upon the established Church. After some persuasion, however, he consented, and industriously circulated the notice. At the time appointed a large assembly of people attended. While Mr. Reed was engaged in prayer 'some of the baser sort' assailed him with eggs and stones. The owner of the ground then stood up, and, addressing the people, declared that he had given him permission to preach upon the ground, and he intended to protect him, and that if any one dared to molest him it would be at the expense of his life. This secured him the opportunity of finishing his discourse, the owner of the property standing beside him. He afterward partook of the hospitality of his new friend, and was then by him protected to the line of his ground. Ere they parted Mr. Reed gained his consent to permit him to preach there in four weeks, though the gentleman assured him it might cost him his life if he returned. The appointment was made; he again preached to a large concourse of people unmolested; and the proprietor of the ground was among the first seals of his ministry." *

Mr. Reed performed much labor as a presiding elder. He was one of the first who were appointed to that office in 1785, and he continued in the position eleven years. Then, in 1796, he was stationed at Fell's Point, and in 1797 in Baltimore. In 1798 he was returned to Fell's Point. In 1799 he was supernumerary; and in 1800, in conse-

* Dr. George C. M. Roberts, on the Rev. Nelson Reed, "Christian Advocate and Journal," December 9, 1840.

quence of the ill-health of his wife, he located. In 1805 he returned to the itinerancy, in which he continued until he retired as a supernumerary in 1819. Twenty-three years of his ministerial life were passed in the presiding eldership.

The character of Mr. Reed was such as to command respect and confidence. His mind was of the solid and practical kind. He was, says Dr. Bond, who knew him long and well, "a pattern of steady, consistent, personal piety, and of clear, sound, and eminently practical views of Christian doctrines. His manner was so grave as to wear somewhat an air of repulsiveness, until a more intimate acquaintance showed that whatever was the interior aspect, all within was sweetened by the love of God and man, which was the ruling principle of his life.

"His preaching evidenced great mental power. It was the power of reflection strengthened by a habit of severe examination of every thought previously to allowing it utterance. He either had no imaginative power or he had kept his fancy so strictly curbed that it had been utterly extinguished. His preaching was characterized by great strength, perspicuity, and invariable soundness; but it was never illustrated nor adorned by even the allowed figures of rhetoric. It was, perhaps, owing to this that in very advanced life and among a people to whom he had preached for half a century he continued as acceptable in old age as in early life. It was a common remark: 'There is no change in Father Reed.' He preaches now just as he always did." *

One of his friends, the Rev. Alfred Griffith, says: "Nelson Reed was of low stature, not more than five feet eight or nine inches high, strongly built, and uncommonly lithe and active in all his movements. His face very fairly represented his character, and on the whole he might be said to be a decidedly fine-looking man.

* Editorial in the "Christian Advocate and Journal," December 9, 1840.

"His perceptions were quick and clear, his judgment discriminating, and his ability to arrange and combine with the best effect very uncommon. While he could not be charged with any thing like impulsiveness or impetuosity, he had a strength of conviction, a tenacity of purpose, that nothing could overawe, and that generally formed a perfect security for the accomplishment of his ends. He was not to be bribed nor terrified—he moved forward like a pillar of light and of strength until by fair, well-considered, and honorable means, you saw that he had attained the object at which he was aiming. These qualities gave him a pre-eminence in the councils of the Church.

"He had a strong round full voice, but not very melodious. He never dealt in metaphysical speculations, which a large part of his audience could not understand, neither did he deal in mere commonplaces, which leave no abiding impressions. His manner in the pulpit was not remarkable for animation. He was deeply versed in the science of theology, and from his rich stores of biblical knowledge he drew largely in every sermon he preached." *

Dr. Roberts, who ministered to Mr. Reed in his last sickness, says: "At almost every visit I conversed with him as freely as his condition would justify in reference to his spiritual state and prospects. At every such interview his first and prompt reply was: 'All is right. I have no pain of mind or body. My mind is kept in perfect peace.'

"The hour of his release came. When asked if he thought he was dying, with great difficulty he replied: 'I do not know. I am in the hands of One too wise to err and too good to be unkind. My dependence is not on my own works. It is on the Rock, Christ Jesus crucified.' These were the last intelligible words that hung upon his dying lips." On the 20th of October, 1840, this hero of Methodism ascended from the precincts of Baltimore to his reward in heaven.

* Sprague's "Annals of the American Pulpit."

Mr. Reed was the last survivor of the elders who were ordained at the Christmas Conference. When his name first appeared in the Minutes, says Dr. Roberts, "there were in this country but 14 circuits and stations, 49 preachers, and 8,577 members." When he died "there were 2,335 circuits and stations, 10,026 preachers, traveling and local, and 795,445 members. If the time of his actual commencing his itinerant labors be referred to, the contrast will appear still more striking, there being at that time in the whole Connection but 10 circuits, 19 preachers, and 3,148 members. In his own Conference, (Baltimore,) at the time of his death, there were seven times as many circuits and stations, (98,) more than nine times as many preachers, traveling and local, (453,) and more than six times as many members, (52,965,) as were in the Connection at the time of his commencing his ministry. No man in our community commanded greater respect and veneration than did he. The flame of his piety was not transient as the meteor's blaze; it was a steady burning and shining light. At the time of his death he was the oldest Methodist traveling preacher either in Europe or America."

JOHN SMITH.

This devoted Christian minister was born in Kent County, Maryland, March 10, 1758. He was converted June 9, 1780. In the year 1784 he was admitted on trial into the itinerancy, and traveled New Hope, Redstone, Greenbrier, Cecil, Talbot, Milford, Somerset, Annamessex twice, Caroline, and Dover Circuits. From the beginning he was of slender constitution, and, of course, seriously felt the severe wear of the pioneer work. He appears to have been a man of lovely character and exemplary life. Henry Boehm says he "possessed much of the spirit of the beloved John. He was a very genial old man, and his conversation was agreeable and profitable. I heard him

preach from Psalm xxiv, 3, 4: 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?' etc. It was a profitable discourse and much good was done." The Rev. Thomas Smith writes, May 12, 1812: "I preached the funeral sermon of the Rev. John Smith, an aged minister of Jesus Christ. He was in the first Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Baltimore, and after spending a long and laborious life in the itinerant connection he died in Chestertown. His remains were borne to the Methodist Episcopal church, where the sermon was delivered on 2 Timothy iv, 7: 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.' A large concourse attended to pay the last tribute of respect to one who lived, to one who died, so well. His remains were then taken to Hynson's Chapel and interred by the side of the late Rev. William Gill."

Thus two of the members of the Christmas Conference await together the resurrection of the just in a grave-yard near Chestertown, Maryland.

Mr. Smith's end was glorious. "His last illness," say his brethren, "was long and trying, but during the whole of it he was a pattern of patience and resignation. His language was: 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; take my enraptured soul away. I am not afraid to die. I long to be dissolved and see the face of God without a dimming veil between. Death has lost his sting.' Thus died our beloved brother, John Smith, on the 10th day of May, 1812, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, at Chestertown, in his native county." *

THOMAS VASEY.

Mr. Vasey, who came to the United States with Dr. Coke and Mr. Whatcoat in 1784, did not remain very long. He labored for a time in the ministry of the new Church, and then was ordained by Bishop White, of the Protestant

* Minutes of 1813.

Episcopal Church, notwithstanding he had received ordination at the hands of Wesley. He was reared in the Church of England, but as he came into manhood he joined the Methodists. When he returned to England he accepted an English curacy. In 1789, however, "he returned to the itinerant work, in which he continued a zealous and successful laborer until 1811. From this year until his death he continued to perform the liturgical services in the City Road Chapel, London." *

Mr. Vasey died suddenly in 1826, at the age of eighty. "His Christian simplicity, pious conversation, his fervency and diligence in prayer, were highly exemplary. For some time previous to his death, nearly one third of his time appeared to be spent in prayer."

THOMAS WARE.

Thomas Ware was a native of New Jersey, and was born in Greenwich, Cumberland County, December 19, 1758. His father died while he was yet young, leaving his mother a widow with eight children. His facilities for education were small. He became a soldier in the Revolution. He afterward formed the purpose of going to sea, and was on the eve of departing when he retired one day to a secluded place, near Mount Holly, New Jersey, to contemplate the plan he had formed. While thus retired and musing on his new project a pleasing voice, exercised in song, fell upon his ear. The melody attracted and pleased him. The voice, which was one of the best he ever heard, proceeded from a man on horseback who was singing a Wesleyan hymn:

"'Still out of the deepest abyss
Of trouble, I mournfully cry;
I pine to recover my peace,
And see my Redeemer, and die.'"

* Lednum's "Rise of Methodism in America," p. 404.

There was something in the voice and also in the language which deeply touched him, especially the words:

> "I cannot, I cannot forbear,
> These passionate longings for home."

The song ceased, but young Ware followed the stranger a considerable distance, hoping he would resume singing. At length he saw him dismount at the house of a Methodist. He then concluded he was a Methodist preacher and would probably preach that night. A wish he felt to hear him he thought could not be indulged, as he had a previous engagement.

Mr. Ware then knew but little of the Methodists, and his mother, who was a Presbyterian, had charged him to avoid them. He had also heard them accused of disloyalty to their country. A Methodist of the town, however, to whom he was under some obligation, suspected him of having serious impressions, and told him that Mr. Pedicord, a very good preacher, would preach that night, and expressed a wish that he should hear him. "I told him," says Ware, "that I presumed I had seen the preacher, and mentioned the lines I had heard him sing. On inquiring if he knew such a hymn, he replied that he did very well, and immediately sung it to the same tune. As he was an excellent singer I was deeply affected, even to tears."

Mr. Ware heard Mr. Pedicord preach that evening, and thereby his course of life was changed. "When the meeting closed," he says, "I hastened to my lodgings, retired to my room, fell upon my knees before God, and spent much of the night in penitential tears. I did not once think of my engagement with my sea-bound companions until the next day, when I went and told the young man, who had induced me to enlist in the project, that I had abandoned all thoughts of going to sea. They, however, proceeded in their perilous undertaking, were betrayed, their officers thrown into prison, and the brig

and cargo confiscated. When I heard of this I praised the Lord for my deliverance."

After his conversion Ware traveled sixty miles to see an unconverted sister. In his first interview with her she was impressed with her need of the same treasure her brother had found, and did not rest until she obtained it.

Mr. Ware became active in religious exercises, and was soon appointed leader of a class. He also employed his gifts in exhortation. Mr. Asbury sent for him, and, in the course of their interview, he led Ware to promise that he would go to a circuit. In September, 1783, he set out upon that noble career in the itinerancy which he maintained for over forty years. In 1825 he retired in advanced age from the active ranks.

Mr. Ware was a prominent man in the Church. We have seen that in 1787 he heroically volunteered to brave the dangers and hardships of a frontier missionary service in Tennessee. In 1789 Bishop Asbury transferred him to North Carolina. In 1791 he was appointed to Wilmington, Delaware. Thenceforward he filled an important sphere as presiding elder, pastor, and Agent of the Book Concern. He ranks with the "heroes of Methodism."

He was a man of mental poise, sound judgment, and symmetrical character. His spirit was genial, his form commanding, and his countenance pleasant. His labors in the pulpit and in other departments of ministerial service were efficient and profitable. His little book of autobiographical reminiscences is especially valuable for the light it sheds upon the early history of the Church. Mr. Ware had the art beyond any of his contemporaries whose works have descended to us of recording, in a pleasing style, the kind of facts that are of value as history. The historical literature of the Church will ever be much indebted to the discriminating pen of Thomas Ware. Numerous facts of interest and importance concerning the early preachers and their work, but for his writings, would now be unknown.

He passed the closing years of his life in retirement in Salem, New Jersey. At the time of his death he was, probably, the oldest minister of his Church. He died March 11, 1842.

WILLIAM WATTERS.

One fact gives to the name of Mr. Watters a special prominence and interest, namely, that he was the first native American who joined the Methodist itinerancy. When Methodism numbered less than twelve hundred members in this land William Watters gave himself to her service in the ministry of the Gospel. He was admitted at the first Conference held in America, at Philadelphia, in June, 1773.

He was born, October 6, 1751, in Baltimore County, Maryland. He heard the Methodists preach about the year 1770. He was happily converted, in May, 1771, in the same house in which he was born. He had no knowledge of any people but the Methodists who professed to know any thing of that which he now enjoyed, and he united himself with them, "and thought it a greater blessing," he says, "to be received a member among them than to be made a prince."

The Methodists had no regular preaching in that day in his region, and there had been only three preachers in Maryland: Strawbridge, King, and Williams. Sometimes quite a long period elapsed in which they had no preaching. "But in one sense," he says, "we were all preachers. The visible change that sinners could not but see, and many openly acknowledged, was a means of bringing them to seek the Lord. On the Lord's day we commonly divided into little bands and went out into different neighborhoods, wherever there was a door open to receive us, two, three, or four in company, and would sing our hymns, pray, read, talk to the people, and some soon began to add a word of exhortation. We were weak, but we lived in a dark day, and the Lord greatly owned our labors.

Though we were not full of wisdom, we were blessed with a good degree of faith and power. The little flock was of one heart and mind. The Lord spread the leaven of his grace from heart to heart, from house to house, and from one neighborhood to another. Though our gifts were small, it was astonishing to see how rapidly the work spread all around, bearing down the little oppositions with which it met as chaff before the wind. Many will praise God forever for our prayer-meetings. In many neighborhoods they soon became respectable and were considerably attended."

Finding that his humble labors were blessed in the conversion of souls, Watters sought by fasting and prayer for divine direction, and finally became convinced that he must go forth as a public laborer in the vineyard. In the fall of 1772 he went to Norfolk, Virginia, with Robert Williams. Mr. Pilmoor took a tour south as far as Charleston, and left Watters to fill his place in Norfolk.

Watters continued to labor in the itinerancy until 1783, when he located. He, however, retained his zeal and continued to labor in the Gospel. He performed considerable service in preaching regularly on a circuit immediately after his retirement. It was probably by reason of his being thus employed that he attended the Christmas Conference. In 1786 he returned to the regular work, but family considerations led him again to desist before half the year had passed. He again entered the active ranks in 1801, and continued till 1806, when he finally retired.

In September, 1783, the Rev. J. J. G. Webster visited the grave of Mr. Watters, in the neighborhood of Langley, Virginia. Of that visit he says: "Learning that the house in which he lived and died is still standing, we bent our way thitherward, and found it about half a mile distant from the place of his burial. It is a one-and-a-half story frame, gable-roofed house, with a capacious stone chimney, built upon the outside, and a single-covered

portico over the entrance. It contains two attic rooms and two rooms on the lower floor—a parlor, in which the meetings used to be held, and a bedroom, in which William Watters died. It stands as he left it, except that the kitchen, which used to be separate, has been moved against the house. This property was bought by Mr. Watters at the time of his first location; and here, with the exception of two brief intervals of itinerant work, he lived for forty-four years.

"His nephew, Mr. Wren, describes him as a man of medium height and slender *physique;* dignified in his carriage, but exceedingly courteous and affable; wearing knee breeches and buckled shoes; claw-hammer coat and gold spectacles. He owned a considerable farm and was in comfortable circumstances; was greatly beloved by the poor, whose lowly homes were often cheered by his presence, his counsel, and his temporal aid. During the last ten years of his life he was almost totally blind, but, notwithstanding this great affliction, he persisted to the close of his life in preaching, in holding public religious meetings at his home, and in visiting the sick and the poor. Mr. Wren says: 'If ever there was a good man it was Uncle Watters.' He also informed us that while Mr. Watters was himself gentle and quiet in demeanor, yet under his preaching and under his singing—for his voice was very sweet—the people would become powerfully moved, and, to use his words, 'he sometimes thought they would shout the roof off the house.' The people for many years and for many miles around regarded Mr. Watters's home as their religious head-quarters. Mr. Watters left no children." * Mrs. Watters survived until October 29, 1845.

According to the record of his death, which is contained in his family Bible, Mr. Watters died March 29, 1827. This date is doubtless correct. Dr. Bond, in his "Appeal,"

* Communication in the "The Baltimore Episcopal Methodist," September 15, 1883.

which was published in 1827, speaks of Watters as having recently deceased. The Rev. Dr. Hamilton, in Sprague's "Annals," was led into the mistake of assigning the death of Mr. Watters to the year 1833.

When in June, 1773, Mr. Watters joined the first Conference held in America, Methodism had only eleven hundred and sixty members in the country, and ten traveling preachers, inclusive of himself. When, nearly fifty-four years subsequently, he ascended to glory from the bosom of the American Methodist Church, its membership numbered about three hundred and eighty thousand, its itinerants about one thousand five hundred, and it had overspread the settled domain of the Republic.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JAMES O'KELLY AND THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH.

EVERY man leaves upon the world the effect of his deeds. The oft-quoted words of Longfellow suggest a great truth:

> "Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime,
> And departing, leave behind us
> Foot-prints on the sands of time."

James O'Kelly has left "foot-prints" behind him.

Simple justice requires that he should be accredited with having secured a General Conference for the Methodist Episcopal Church. That essential and valuable constituent of its polity is the legacy which the unfortunate Virginia presiding elder left to the denomination which for years he served with conspicuous ability and devotion.

The Christmas Conference effected a Church organization in outline, but left many details untouched. No provision was made by that body for a convocation of preachers to determine questions of government which must inevitably arise, with the development of the Church, and demand authoritative decision.

Before the Church was organized each ecclesiastical problem and plan was adjusted either by Mr. Wesley or the District Conferences. After that event this method was found to be inadequate. In 1789 the Bishops proposed a Council of Presiding Elders for the purpose of initiating legislation and exercising supervision of the college, and other affairs of the Church. To this plan the Conferences assented; and, accordingly, the first Council was held at Baltimore, December 1, 1789.

It was then believed that a General Conference was not practicable because of the great extent of the country and the inconvenience that would attend the gathering of the preachers from distant circuits to its sessions.

The Council was to "mature every thing they might see necessary for the good of the Church," and "to correct all abuses and disorders." None but Bishops and presiding elders were allowed to participate in its deliberations. Mr. O'Kelly charged that Asbury denied the application of two preachers for admission, thus: "Francis refused two worthy ministers a seat in Council in his absolute manner without rendering any reason for such conduct." To this Mr. Snethen replied: "Why did not Mr. O'Kelly render the reason? Doubtless he knew why Mr. Asbury did not admit them. These men had no right to a seat in the Council. Mr. Asbury asked leave of the District Conferences to meet all the presiding elders in Council at Baltimore. These took their seats.* Two preachers, it appears, who were not presiding elders, asked leave to sit in the Council, but Mr. Asbury had no authority to grant them their request." †

The plan or constitution of the Council provided that its action concerning any measure might be vetoed by a majority of the District Conferences. Mr. O'Kelly, who sat in the first Council, afterward strongly opposed accepting its action, and he was the chief agent in abolishing the plan. When the measures which had been adopted by the Council came before the Virginia Conference, O'Kelly's opposition was so effective that the vote was almost unanimous against their acceptance. Mr. Snethen, in his "Reply to O'Kelly," says: "The design of the Council was to prepare business to be laid before the District Conferences. When their resolutions were laid before the Virginia Conference, Mr. O'Kelly had obtained,

* There were nine in attendance, besides Asbury.

† "Reply to O'Kelly," by the Rev. Nicholas Snethen.

by his unremitted efforts, sufficient influence over all the members but two, * to induce them to reject the whole." This was, undoubtedly, a severe test of the patience of Asbury. Says Mr. Snethen: "Mr. Asbury, knowing that Mr. O'Kelly was the sole author of all this, probably said some things which, upon reflection, he did not justify." †

Though the work of the Council received such condemnatory treatment from this Conference, the Bishop believed it to be the wisest method for obtaining necessary legislation. He proceeded to hold a second Council, according to the appointment made by the first. He sought to rally the preachers to sustain this measure. He wrote to Morrell some time after the first Council: "The general opinion is, that we ought to have a Council, and that the men should be the choice of their different Conferences, and their mouths, eyes, and ears hostages and sureties for the firm and lasting union and order of the body; and that nothing should be binding upon the whole body without a majority of the General Conference.‡ Can you think it fit that the Bishops or Bishop—as the chief lies upon myself—should have the sole government of our college and schools, unaided by the counsel of the wisest and most able of our brethren, whom I hope the wisdom of the Conferences will elect? Ought he not to try to be guarded better and have a Council, as so many witnesses to his probity and transactions, and a security that he may not run headlong to make the community insolvent? The profits arising from printing, if that work is prudently conducted, will, ere long, make one thousand per year. We have told the public how these profits shall be applied, and they expect

* Asbury states, in a letter to Morrell, that the division stood 23 to 3.

† "Reply to O'Kelly."

‡ By General Conference the Bishop must have meant the preachers in general gathered in their Conferences as differentiated from the select number in the Council. There was no General Conference at that time, in the sense of that term as now understood.

that we not only mean, but will do, what we promise. Now as the train of this was laid by me, it ought not to be and cannot be taken out of my hands altogether as the Bishop of the Church—as in some sense to many the father of the Connection, unless it can be proved I have done wickedly. As to acting weakly, I may have done so. Therefore I want good and frequent counsel. I can ask the Conferences, but I cannot drag the business twelve or thirteen times through Conferences; that is enough to tire the spirit of Moses and Job. The General Conference cannot advise, but a select number hearing, seeing, and knowing all transactions, may give me great assistance and instruction."

Six months before the second Council the Bishop again wrote Mr. Morrell: "If you can make a visit to Cokesbury in December, I will make you welcome. I expect the resolutions of the Council, relative to the college, will have the power of laws. When persons and circumstances are properly brought before them on the spot they can determine better than distant Conferences." He also in 1790 wrote Morrell: "I am, I think, prepared to answer every objection to candid minds against the Council, and that is of vast moment."

The plan, however, notwithstanding Asbury's influence and efforts, could hardly be called successful. Only ten presiding elders attended the second Council which considered itself invested "with full power to act decisively in all temporal matters, and to recommend to the several Conferences any new canons, or alterations to be made in old ones."

The first historian of the Church says: "This Council determined to have another meeting two years from that time, but their proceedings gave such dissatisfaction to our Connection in general, and to some of the traveling preachers in particular, that they were forced to abandon the plan. There has never since been a meeting of the kind.

"When the first Council met I wrote them a letter, in which I stated my objections to their plan, and pointed out the difficulties it would produce, and contended for a General Conference, which was disapproved by all the Council." *

The letter of Mr. Lee called forth a reply, which indicates that the members of the Council were not prepared to entertain suggestions adverse to their views. The letter addressed to Mr. Lee was as follows:

"IN COUNCIL, BALTIMORE, *Dec.* 7, 1789.

"VERY DEAR BROTHER: We are both grieved and surprised to find that you make so many objections to the very fundamentals of Methodism. But we consider *your want of experience* in many things, and therefore put the best construction on your intention. You are acquainted with the discipline of the Methodist Church. If you can *quietly* labor among us under our discipline and rules, we cheerfully retain you as our brother and fellow-laborer, and remain yours in sincere affection."

This letter was signed, with others, by James O'Kelly. Yet after that Council had adjourned, Mr. O'Kelly became the most zealous and active antagonist of its measures. Of this apparent inconsistency of O'Kelly, Mr. Lee said: "You complained heavily of me, and indirectly threatened to turn me out of the Church if I was not quiet, because I wrote to the preachers the objections I had to make; and then you yourself began to exclaim bitterly against your own plan, and to lay all the blame upon those that were united with you.

"Chapter x, verse 1, you say: 'I wrote several letters to the different Conferences through the medium of the president elders, and Brother Jesse helped me a little.' Wherein I helped you I cannot tell, unless it was in writing to the Council. If that helped you I am sure you

* Lee's "History of the Methodists," pp. 158, 159.

ought to have asked my pardon for intimating that you would turn me out from among you if I was not quiet. If I helped you by writing against your plan in 1789, I hope I shall help you to see and understand things better by writing against you also at this time." *

Bishop Asbury appears to have been opposed to a General Conference, while Mr. O'Kelly was thoroughly in favor of it. The latter labored zealously and successfully to accomplish his design. He wrote letters to Dr. Coke and secured his co-operation. As a result Asbury and Coke were brought to the verge of antagonism. Mr. Snethen, in his "Reply to O'Kelly," shows this in the following passage: "It is nothing strange that Dr. Coke should be affected by Mr. O'Kelly's representation of Mr. Asbury's conduct; and finding Mr. Asbury averse to a General Conference, it is not surprising that the doctor should insist upon Mr. O'Kelly's request being granted. A few sharp words passed between the two Bishops on this occasion, but the heat was over in a moment."

In this struggle O'Kelly won with the aid of Coke. Seeing that a crisis was reached which he could not wisely ignore, Asbury sacrificed his personal wish and consented that a General Conference should be held. Snethen says: "Mr. Asbury submitted to a General Conference for fear of a division in the Connection. Like the true mother, he could not bear the idea of dividing the living child. Note the 'General Meeting' or 'Conference' is 'appointed according to *our request.*' It is Mr. O'Kelly and his friends that request it, and Mr. Asbury and his friends consent to it for the sake of peace." †

Bishop Asbury's record in his Journal respecting this affair is in harmony with Mr. Snethen's statement. March 23, 1791, he writes: "Long-looked-for Doctor Coke came to town [Charleston.] He had been shipwrecked off Edisto. I found the doctor's sentiments with regard to the Coun-

* "Life and Times of Jesse Lee." † "Reply to O'Kelly."

cil quite changed. James O'Kelly's letters had reached London. I felt perfectly calm, and acceded to a General Conference for the sake of peace." Mr. Snethen states that "the instant a General Conference was acceded to the Council was superseded." *

The General Conference having been decided upon, it was convened on the first day of November, 1792. "A committee of the most judicious and the most experienced members was chosen to select and lay before the Conference subjects of the greatest importance in order to facilitate business. It was the opinion of this committee that it would be proper to revise and correct the form of discipline; to make it more perfect and systematic. Each section was proposed in order, debated, ratified, or rejected by the majority." †

That which gives distinction to the General Conference of 1792 was the debate and settlement of the question, whether the power of stationing the preachers should be retained absolutely by the Bishop, or be shared by the Conference under certain conditions. Mr. O'Kelly was the leader of a movement to modify the Bishop's power of appointment to the extent of allowing to any preacher who should feel dissatisfied with the place assigned him an appeal to the Conference. The proposition was embodied in the following words, namely: "After the Bishop appoints the preachers at Conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections, and if the Conference approve his objections the Bishop shall appoint him to another circuit."

There was nothing in this proposition which could detract in any degree from the Christian excellence or the Methodist loyalty of the men who advocated it. It was purely a question of Church polity, which, like any

* "Reply to O'Kelly." This shows that until that time the plan of a General Conference had not been adopted. † Snethen's Reply.

other question, required to be settled upon its merits. The Methodists of England, since Wesley's death, have practiced the principle which Mr. O'Kelly desired the American Methodist Church to adopt, namely, that of permitting an aggrieved preacher to appeal to the Conference for a change of appointment. Some of the best and ablest ministers of the young Church held O'Kelly's view. The motion to thus limit the Bishop's power was ably advocated in the General Conference by Freeborn Garrettson, Hope Hull, and Richard Ivey. William M'Kendree, also, earnestly favored the limitation. Mr. O'Kelly was his presiding elder. They went to the General Conference together. Says M'Kendree: "We arrived at the seat of the General Conference, and were appointed to lodge together. Conference commenced. Division of sentiment indeed! Our lodging room was a council chamber." *

The issue now became joined. It awakened deep interest and no doubt a degree of excitement. Asbury says: "I felt awful at the General Conference." He further says: "Some individuals among the preachers having their jealousies about my influence in the Conference, I gave the matter wholly up to them and to Dr. Coke, who presided. Meantime I sent them the following letter:

"My Dear Brethren: Let my absence give you no pain. Dr. Coke presides. I am happily excused from assisting to make laws by which myself am to be governed. I have only to obey and execute. I am happy in the consideration that I never stationed a preacher through enmity or as a punishment. I have acted for the glory of God, the good of the people, and to promote the usefulness of the preachers. Are you sure that if you please yourselves the people will be as fully satisfied? They often say, 'Let us have such a preacher,' and sometimes, 'We will not have such a preacher—we will sooner pay him to stay at home.'

* Bishop Payne's "Life of M'Kendree."

Perhaps I must say, 'His appeal forced him upon you.' I am one; ye are many. I am as willing to serve you as ever. I want not to sit in any man's way. I scorn to solicit votes. I am a very trembling poor creature to hear praise or dispraise. Speak your minds freely; but remember, you are only making laws for the present time. It may be that, as in some other things, so in this, a future day may give you further light. I am yours, etc.,

"FRANCIS ASBURY."

John Dickins displayed his parliamentary skill and leadership at this important juncture in the Church's history. "By one of those strokes of policy by which mischief is exposed and prevented, and the integrity of a great principle is preserved, Mr. Dickins moved a division of the subject, thus: First. Shall the Bishop appoint the preachers to their circuits? Second. Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal? The first question was carried without a dissenting voice. The fate of the other soon followed—it was rejected by a large majority."* This decision so greatly grieved Mr. O'Kelly that he sent to the Conference his withdrawal in writing and departed. Efforts were made to retain him, and tears were shed, but without effect. He appeared to have received an incurable wound. Mr. Snethen has strongly sketched the case: "We come now to the awful point—the separation! Mr. O'Kelly, perhaps, is the first preacher who ever proposed an appeal to the Conference. Mr. Asbury's name is called in question. It is suggested that he has been guilty of weakness and wickedness. He is distressed at the heat which prevails in the Conference, and goes out to give his enemies liberty to sift his character and conduct. To give sufficient time for a fair investigation of the motion, when the usual hour of adjournment arrives, the time is fixed to resume the debate. The subject is resumed. Nothing is left

* "Life and Times of Rev. Jesse Lee," p. 273.

unsaid, let it be ever so personal, ever so severe. The vote at length is taken in the fairest manner; the motion is *negatived.* The stationing of the preachers is to remain with the Bishop, as it has from the beginning. The Rev. James O'Kelly leaves the Conference, withdraws from the Connection, endeavors to make a division among the preachers and societies, to effect which the blackest epithets and the severest censures are propagated though the country against Mr. Asbury and the General Conference.

"Now what could Mr. Asbury do more than he did? For fear of a division by this man he consents, and advises the preachers to consent, to a General Conference. A motion is made for an appeal. Mr. Asbury knows that if this motion is carried it will go directly to the destruction of the Traveling Plan. He foresees that another preacher can never be stationed whenever this motion takes effect; yet he interferes not. He leaves it entirely with the majority to determine, and the wisdom of the majority rejects the new plan. Must Mr. Asbury now rise up, countermand the vote, and expel all these men if they do not grant an appeal? This he could not even attempt to do, for a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church holds no negative upon the Conference; he has no compulsory influence over any member.

"Is this the man who has suffered so much for the cause of truth and liberty? Is this the advocate of liberty and equality? Is this the enemy of despotism and oppression? It will be hard to discover any of these features in the conduct of Mr. O'Kelly in separating from his brethren. Where is the truth, the liberty, the equality, the opposition to despotism and oppression in this man who, if he cannot influence more than one hundred preachers to think as he thinks and say as he says, will dissolve his connection with them, and, like a true son of discord, endeavor to divide and destroy them?

"Apology, chapter xvi, verse 1. 'It was surely a very fatal

hour of papal darkness in which a law passed that an injured brother, and a minister in the Church of Christ, should have no redress.' One is inclined to believe that Mr. O'Kelly has contemplated the dark side so long that every thing he looks at takes a black and erroneous complexion. If there has been any hour of 'papal darkness' it must have been the fatal hour in which the Apology was written. How, in the name of truth and love, could Mr. O'Kelly possibly conceive the ideas that are asserted in this text? A number of preachers, in the capacity of a Conference, reject a motion which is laid before them, and this is called the passing of a law! But what fills us with wonder and great amazement is that he should call it a law that no injured brother and minister should have redress. Put the very worst construction upon the conduct of the Conference, and it will amount to no more than this: That a preacher, who *thinks* himself injured in his appointment and requests to have an appeal to the District Conference, shall not have the indulgence. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! In Conference the motion is to provide an appeal to prevent imaginary injury; but in the Apology the rejection of the motion is called a law which cuts off every brother from justice in every possible case. If Mr. O'Kelly uses on other occasions this talent of amplification as successfully as in the present case his readers will derive but little correct information from his words.

"In what a ludicrous situation would the appeal have placed the Bishop and the Conferences. A preacher has an appointment. He thinks himself injured. 'Brethren,' says he, 'I think the Bishop has injured me in giving me this station?' 'Very well, brother, if you think so you need not go. The Bishop shall send another in your room.' The Bishop is obliged to appoint another, perhaps one who has already received his station and is well satisfied with it. He not only thinks himself injured, but is

really injured if he be forced to give up his station to satisfy the caprice of his *thinking* brother. How can a preacher know whether his appointment will be an injury to him before he makes the trial? And how can the Conference know, when possibly two thirds of them may not only be ignorant of the station, but also of the preacher? To raise such objections against the appeal, in Mr. O'Kelly's opinion, savors of 'ignorance or of policy.' If Mr. O'Kelly could not see the evil of allowing his *thinking* preachers an appeal, he must be ignorant of human nature and of the Itinerant Plan. If he did see the evil and still persisted in supporting the motion, he must have been actuated by policy. At least he betrays a degree of weakness in publishing to the world a lame account of that peculiar production of his own brain—a rule to prevent imaginary injuries! The reader, by looking over the yearly Minutes, will judge whether Mr. O'Kelly had any design or policy in proposing an appeal. His stations for ten years, from 1782 to 1792, were almost constantly in the heart of old Virginia, presiding over a large district of the very best circuits in the Connection. Supposing that the privilege of an appeal had been granted, and this injured man had been stationed on his old ground, would he have appealed to the Conference for a station upon the banks of the Ohio, upon the frontiers of Kentucky and Tennessee, or upon the burning sands of Georgia?" *

Coke informs us that the General Conference of 1792 was in session fifteen days. He was impressed with the ability displayed by its members in their deliberations. He says: "I had always entertained very high ideas of the piety and zeal of the American preachers and of the considerable abilities of many; but I had no expectation, I confess, that the debates would be carried on in so very masterly a manner, so that on every question of importance the subject seemed to be considered in every possible light.

* Snethen's "Reply to O'Kelly."

"Throughout the whole of the debate they considered themselves as the servants of the people, and, therefore, never lost sight of them on any question. Indeed, the single eye and spirit of humility which were manifested by the preachers throughout the whole of the Conference were extremely pleasing, and afforded a comfortable prospect of the increase of the work of God throughout the continent. They determined that the next General Conference shall be held on the first of November, 1796; and that in the meantime the districts respectively shall hold Annual Conferences.*

"On Thursday, the 15th, after the Conference finally broke up, I preached on 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' A solem awe rested upon the congregation. The meeting was continued till about midnight, and twelve persons, we have reason to believe, were adopted into the family of God. This was a glorious conclusion; a gracious seal from Heaven to our proceedings."

Several of O'Kelly's adherents, among whom was M'Kendree, went away from the Conference in company with their chief. M'Kendree says: "The old gentleman broke off. I and some others obtained liberty of the Conference to return home, and set out for Virginia. We had many consultations, were often confused in our deliberations, and, the rest of the company having left us, the old gentleman and myself traveled the greater part of the way together. He unfolded his plan. It was to be 'a glorious Church,' 'no slavery,' etc. But it was founded upon the supposition that a ruinous government was being introduced by the revolutionizing Conference he had left. The supposed design of the Bishop answered to the root, and the more

* Annual Conference boundaries were not formed by the General Conference until 1796.

ingenious of our cabinet discovered the trunk and all the branches of this tree. It was 'dark;' it was 'popery!' It was a horrible thing."

M'Kendree, however, sought a fuller acquaintance with Mr. Asbury, and a more accurate knowledge of his character. The result was he soon abandoned O'Kelly and returned to his ministerial labors in the Church. O'Kelly proceeded to cry out against the General Conference, and especially against Asbury. Alarming divisions resulted. "If he had meditated mischief," says the Rev. Dr. Le Roy M. Lee, "he accomplished enough to gratify the taste of any one whose lust of evil is not set on fire of hell. It was as a traveler in the path of his ravages that Bishop Asbury, with characteristic plainness of speech, says: 'I was employed in reading "The Curse of Divisions."' Dr. Coke, who had co-operated with O'Kelly in promoting his design of a General Conference, became aware of the evil results of his course and called him "an eminent schismatic." "James O'Kelly," he exclaims, in 1796, "once a most useful presiding elder, but now burning with zeal to make schisms wherever it is in his power."

The course of O'Kelly, and the serious agitation he created, was, no doubt, a great trial to Asbury. The Church was not sufficiently strong to bear the strain of a formidable hostile movement originating from within itself without peril. Wisdom and firmness were necessary to control the exciting and adverse conditions. In a letter to Mr. Morrell, after the General Conference of 1792, Bishop Asbury refers to Mr. O'Kelly, and says: "It seems he will print his cause. This will bring many things to light that have been hidden. He goes where he pleases, writes what he pleases, and sends it open to the preachers by the people. All the traveling preachers that were his warmest friends have left him, except M'Kendree. I believe now nothing short of being an episcopos was his first aim. His second was to make the Council independent of the Bishop and

General Conference, if they would canonize his writings. This could not be done. His next step was with the authority of a Pope to forbid me, by letter, to go one step farther with the Council, after carrying it once around the continent and through the first Council which ordered me to go round and know the minds of the brethren. His following step was to write against me to Mr. Wesley, who he knew was disaffected to me, because I did not merely force the American Conference to accede to Mr. Wesley's appointment of Brother Whatcoat, which I did submit to Dr. Coke only for peace with our old father. How moved he then to make himself independent of me and the general Connection, and dragged in the little doctor, whom, a little before, he would have banished from the continent. Then he stipulated with me through the doctor to let him stay in that station, and consented to leave the decision to a General Conference, and when the decision went against him, went away. Now he, who was one of the greatest opposers they had, is suspected of raising a sedition among the local preachers. And, lastly, to set the people against us. Thus he has gone." Mr. O'Kelly was unwise in the policy he adopted. His mental eye became darkened by the smoke of the fire he had kindled. He thought the Church of Asbury would be shaken perhaps to its fall. "Men of wit," he said, "will leave the traveling connection." He did shake the Church, but it withstood the shock. During the height of the excitement there was a clear loss in the membership of seven thousand three hundred and fifty-two.

James O'Kelly was no ordinary man. He had a fine career as a Methodist preacher. Asbury, in a letter to Wesley, in March, 1784, speaks of O'Kelly's usefulness, and describes him as a man of God. He was opposed to slavery and boldly denounced it. When, however, he devoted his talents to inaugurating ecclesiastical rebellion, and to dividing the Church he had helped to build, his light became sadly eclipsed. Foiled in his plan at the General

Conference of 1792, he, like Garrettson and Hull, should have submitted to the result and gone forward as a faithful minister of Christ. Then his subsequent history would not have been clouded by disappointment, vexation, and failure. There is reason to think that Mr. O'Kelly, under the influence of prejudice and passion, hastily turned aside from his providential path. Thereby he became an instrument of afflicting the Church, and of bringing evil upon himself as well as upon Zion. The unfortunate strife which he stirred up prevailed chiefly in the southern portion of Virginia and in the adjoining counties of North Carolina. "In all this region the influence of O'Kelly was very great, and he scrupled not to use it in building up his own cause. The history of this painful schism is full of sad memorials." *

Mr. O'Kelly organized a "Republican Methodist Church." It afterward appears to have assumed the name of "Christian Church." A writer in the year 1829 says: "I have been acquainted with Mr. O'Kelly and his party from my childhood until his death, and for the last twelve years of my life have been a member of that body. They continue gradually to increase, but the exact number I am not able to give. I feel clear in saying there are several thousands, the major part, I believe, residing in North Carolina and Virginia." † The same writer says: "Mr. O'Kelly remained a firm and strenuous advocate of the primitive apostolic form of Church government, and died, in the triumphs of faith, on the 16th of October, 1826." It is said that he attained to the great age of ninety-one years.

* Bennett's "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia."

† Correspondent in "Mutual Rights and Christian Intelligencer," Baltimore, 1829.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE NEW CHURCH IN THE WEST.

THE old Western Conference embraced all the territory west of the Alleghany Mountains. Vast as was its extent, the population within its bounds was very small. In the years 1796–98 the Rev. John Kobler was employed in extending old circuits and forming new ones "on the frontiers of Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio." "Many of these newly-settled countries," says Kobler, "consisted of small groups of a few families, or strings of settlements on the water-courses." Two itinerants, at least, were in Tennessee before the Christmas Conference, and in 1786, as we have shown, the foundations of the Church were laid in Kentucky. It was not until near the end of the century that the itinerancy extended its lines to the North-west Territory, now the State of Ohio.

In the year 1798 Bishop Asbury sent John Kobler as a missionary into that territory. Mr. Kobler that year formed the first circuit within its borders. It was called Miami Circuit. Its boundaries are given by Kobler: "Beginning at Columbia, and running up the Little Miami and Mad River to Zanesville, thence down the Big Miami to Cincinnati."* The city of Cincinnati stands upon ground which, Mr. Kobler says, was then "nearly a dense and uncultivated forest. No improvement was to be seen but Fort Washington, which was built on the brow of the hill and extended down to the margin of the river, around which was built a number of cabins, in which resided the first settlers of the place. This fortress was then

* Kobler's communication in the "Christian Advocate and Journal," Aug. 5, 1831.

under the command of General Harrison, and was the great place of rendezvous for the federal troops which were sent by the general government to guard the frontiers or to go forth to war with the Indians."*

During Kobler's ministry south and west of the Ohio River, near the close of the eighteenth century, he found religious destitution in the sparse settlements. "Many of these," he says, "had not a preacher within forty or fifty miles of them except 'itinerants.'" Kobler states that when he administered the Lord's Supper for the first time north-west of the Ohio River the number of the communicants "did not exceed twenty-five or thirty. This was the sum total of all that were in the country."†

The work prospered, however, among the settlers, and the Church was securely founded by the zealous pioneer itinerants in the region known as the Western Conference. Kobler, after giving the boundaries of his circuit, as above quoted, says: "This was the first regular circuit that was formed in the Ohio State. There I witnessed, in these outskirts of the work more especially, the unspeakable blessings attending itinerancy. There, in the wilderness, the itinerant, mighty in the strength of prayer, lifted up his voice and cried aloud, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Immediately 'the wilderness and the solitary places were glad for them; the desert' began to 'blossom as the rose.' Thousands upon thousands were charmed by the Gospel, and won by grace and mercy to God. Large societies were formed where the sacraments were as duly and successfully administered as in any of the older towns or settlements. While others in the old settlements are contemplating ways and means to send the Gospel, are raising outfits and lighting their torch, the itinerants will already have gone forth and set the new world on fire." ‡

* Quoted in Finley's "Sketches of Western Methodism," p. 170.

† Finley's Sketches.

‡ "Christian Advocate and Journal," August 5, 1831.

It was not long after Kobler formed the Miami Circuit until the region was favored with an extensive revival. The Rev. Henry Smith, who left Kentucky for Ohio, September 11, 1799, says, not long afterward, a "work broke out in Mr. Dunlavery's congregation, on Eagle Creek, Ohio. This glorious revival soon spread nearly over the State, and was quite common in Presbyterian as well as Methodist congregations."

John Kobler was born in Culpepper County, Virginia, August 29, 1768. He was converted in December, 1787, and entered the ministry in 1789. Soon he volunteered to serve as a pioneer evangelist in the West. Possessed of a strong constitution, he gave his strength to the work of God in that field of exposure and toil, and returned in a few years with a shattered body and a broken voice. He located and settled at or near Fredericksburg, Virginia. Some years before his death he was re-admitted by the Baltimore Conference, but continued in retirement. He was a faithful, evangelical, useful preacher, one of the heroes of whom the world was not worthy. On his deathbed he said: "I have tried all my life to make my ministry and life consistent." Shortly before life ceased he was asked, "Is Jesus precious?" "O yes," he answered, "very precious, very precious." He died in Fredericksburg, July 26, 1843.

Mr. Smith formed Scioto Circuit in the fall of 1799. He says: "I crossed the Ohio River near the mouth of Little Miami and pushed on to Mad River to see Brother Hunt, the preacher on Miami Circuit. Finding him still in his work, I returned to Little Miami, and on the 23d [September] I started up the Ohio River to form a new circuit. I commenced on Eagle Creek and directed my course toward the mouth of the Scioto, and thence up the river to Chillicothe. In three weeks I formed Scioto Circuit, preaching a number of times, and sending appointments to other places against I came around again.

"In the spring of 1800 I went to Baltimore to attend the General Conference, and, by my own request, was returned to Scioto. Bishop Asbury was disposed to release me, saying, 'You have been there long enough.' As he could get no person I thought would suit the place, I went back and continued there until the fall of 1801. In some respects I was as well calculated to be a missionary there as most men, for I had accustomed myself to eat any thing that was set before me, and could sleep anywhere, and accommodate myself to every inconvenience, so that I might do good to the souls and bodies of my fellow-men. That summer bilious and intermittent fevers prevailed to a great extent in that country, particularly on the water-courses and near the large river bottoms. It was a time of great affliction among the new settlers. I myself was sick. Providentially I was on a short visit to Kentucky when first taken, where I could get medical aid. I was very ill, indeed, and my life was despaired of; but Christ was precious, and I was resigned to the will of Heaven. Being very anxious to be at my work, I ventured out before I was well able to ride, had a relapse, and was again brought to death's door; but I was among my beloved flock and at my post. I then felt as I never did before that 'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' My way was clear and my soul was full of glory.

"As soon as I was able to ride I pushed ahead again, but being much exposed I relapsed again, and again, so that I did not get entirely clear of intermittent fevers for more than eighteen months. I pressed on, through thick and thin, though in great weakness, and often suffered much. I started in February, 1801, from Point Creek, for New Market, a distance of nearly fifty miles, and about thirty miles through a wilderness where no one lived. I was overtaken by a tremendous snow-storm mixed with hail. I began to think that my lot was hard and wept till I met

a poor fellow who was out in the storm as well as myself. I said to myself, 'This man is not as well clad as I am, and he is out on his own business; I am on the Lord's business.' I dried up my tears and went on cheerfully with a heart to sing,

"'In hope of that immortal crown,
I now the cross sustain;
And gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain.'"

The work continued to prosper in Ohio, notwithstanding the fevers, bad roads, long rides, and exposures with which the itinerants had to contend. In May Mr. Smith found comfort and relief among congenial spirits. "Monday, 18," he says: "I got to my old friend, M'Cormick's,*

* Francis M'Cormick is said to have introduced Methodism in Ohio. He was not an itinerant. Mr. Smith knew him in Virginia, where he was converted, about 1790. He says M'Cormick was a Universalist and advocated the doctrine. He attended Methodist meeting, says Smith, "got powerfully awakened, joined society, and that night began to pray in his family. M'Cormick became a leader of a class, an exhorter, and finally a local preacher, and was a pioneer in the West. In the fall of 1799 I found him on the banks of the Little Miami, opening the way for the traveling preachers." Mr. M'Cormick started for the West, October 10, 1795, reached Bourbon County, Kentucky, in December; "for many reasons did not like it and was resolved to go to the North-west Territory." "I went," he says, "and liked it well, stayed seventeen months in that territory, and moved to the Little Miami, near where Milford now stands. The good Spirit of the Lord impressed it upon my mind that I must make a class-paper and have my own name and that of my family on it. I did so, and made up a class of ten. I then began to hold meetings in different places and made up two more. I began to be very uneasy, having no regular traveling preacher. I attended two of the Kentucky Conferences to persuade the preachers to 'Come over into Macedonia, and help us,' but all in vain, there being but few preachers, and these had all Kentucky and West Tennessee to travel. The Rev. John Kobler, who was presiding elder in Kentucky, volunteered to suffer and to hold forth a dying Saviour to lost men. His coming was refreshing to all. I went with him up the Little Miami and to Mad River as far as there were inhabitants, and then down the Great Miami." (M'Cormick's narrative, "Methodist Magazine," 1822.) According to M'Cormick this was in 1799. Kobler and Smith put it in 1798. The Minutes furnish no information respecting the date, as in 1798 they show Kobler as appointed to Cum-

I rested till Saturday, took medicine, and recovered so far as to be able to preach and hold the quarterly meeting at Brother Gatch's.* It was a blessed season of refreshing from the Lord; light, love, and power prevailed, and although I was sick, I found it good to be there."

The Rev. William M'Kendree, the presiding elder of the Kentucky District, which included the work in Ohio, wrote October 10, 1802, as follows: "To give you a par-

berland, and in 1799 to Hinkstone. As neither of these circuits was in Ohio it looks, at first glance, as if M'Cormick's date (August, 1799) was the true one of the beginning of Kobler's work in Ohio. Gatch, however, corroborates Kobler and Smith as to the date; therefore, it may be considered that Miami Circuit was formed in 1798. The Minutes cannot be accepted as authority concerning appointments in those missionary days in all cases.

* Philip Gatch was one of the earliest native itinerants, and was prominent in the ministry. He located in Virginia before the Church was organized. He was antislavery and removed in 1798 to the North-west Territory. He located in M'Cormick's neighborhood. He was long an influential citizen and a faithful local preacher in Ohio. Mr. Gatch says that he and the Rev. James Smith and Ambrose Ranson, with their families, set out for the West, October 11, 1798. "I purchased," says Gatch, "a tract in the forks of the Little Miami. Near this place Brother Francis M'Cormick, a Methodist preacher from Virginia, had settled and collected a society. This and other considerations induced me to settle where I did. I preached at Newtown and at two places on the west of the Miami River. Our congregations were small, as the people were thinly settled in the neighborhood. About the middle of February we had our cabin finished and moved into it. John Kobler had come from Virginia to travel and preach in this newly-settled country. His labors were hard and his difficulties great; but he sowed the good seed of the kingdom in different places. It encouraged the few Methodists that were scattered abroad in the new country. He left us, and in the month of June [this must have been the year 1799] Lewis Hunt came to labor with us. He traveled extensively, labored much, and his usefulness appeared in some places, but his constitution failed; he returned to Kentucky, and afterward died in peace. Henry Smith also visited us and labored in the Gospel. His station was on the Scioto. After these preachers left us we were without a traveling preacher for a considerable time." (Gatch's Biography, by Judge M'Lean.) The Rev Henry Smith says of the Rev. Lewis Hunt, who followed Kobler in Ohio: "He was very anxious to see me, but before I got around to where he was he had finished his short race and gone to his reward. I loved this young man very much. His premature death took hold of my feellings and I wept over his grave."

ticular account of the work of God in the western country would exceed the bounds of a letter and swell into a pamphlet. I can, therefore, give you but a general view of what God is in mercy doing for this people.

"My spring visit ended at our old friend, Philip Gatch's, Little Miami, on the third Sunday in June, which was the thirteenth Sabbath in continuity that I attended meetings from two to four days each. Our congregations were generally large. In places where fifty formerly made a respectable congregation a thousand is now a tolerable gathering, and, blessed be God! we were generally favored with distinguishing marks of the Divine presence. I introduced the Limestone quarterly meeting with Romans i, 16. The Lord was present, indeed. We had a most solemn meeting. At the sacrament on the Lord's day, which was administered out-of-doors of necessity, the Lord was powerfully present. The place was so awful that the looks of the by-standers visibly proclaimed, 'God is here and we are afraid.' Psalm lxxxiv, 11, was the subject on Monday. The sermon that day imperceptibly led my mind back to the day of Pentecost, for truly the burst of joy, when it could be restrained no longer, was as the voice of a rushing wind. A few appeared to be angry and withdrew, but the work continued until near sunset. It would be mere conjecture to give the number converted.

"People came from afar to the Miami quarterly meeting. I heard of women who walked thirty miles to it, so that our congregation was very large for that new country. On the first day we were favored with the presence of the Lord in a singular manner, and I think I may safely say it increased throughout the meeting. On Sunday two young women of genteel appearance fell not far from the stand, but were presently taken off by some men—their brothers, as I was informed. The Spirit of God, like a sword, pierced one of the men, and about ten steps from the stand he suddenly fell to the earth, together with

his weeping charge, and cried aloud for mercy! The other was graciously visited in like manner. Thus there were four instead of two deeply engaged. This attracted the attention of many, so that there were many convicted through their means, and I am informed they never rested until they found peace, by which means religion was carried into other parts, and the work of God continued to spread." *

Francis Poythress had been presiding elder of this extensive district, but when his infirmity of mind compelled him to retire, M'Kendree was transferred from Virginia, by Bishop Asbury, to preside over it. The Rev. Jacob Young, who was among the early Methodist converts in Ohio, received baptism at the hands of Poythress. Of M'Kendree Mr. Young says: "He was a distinguished minister of Jesus Christ. I suppose he found the district in very bad order. It covered the whole of Kentucky and Tennessee. The elder that preceded him was a very old man. The roads were bad and the rides very long. The burden was too heavy for the good old man and he sank under it.

"M'Kendree had been but a few months on the ground until he understood perfectly his field of labor. He moved day and night, visiting families, organizing societies, and holding Quarterly Conferences. It was his constant practice to travel from thirty to fifty miles in a day and preach at night. All classes of people flocked to hear him—statesmen, lawyers, doctors, and theologians of all denominations clustered around him, saying, as they returned home, 'Did you ever hear the like before?' Some, indeed, were so captivated, that they would say, 'Never man speak like this man!' He saw that the harvest was truly great and the laborers few. Early in the morning and late in the evening, with streaming eyes, he prayed God, with hands and heart uplifted, that he would send laborers into the harvest.

* Extracts of Letters.

"He was actively engaged forming new circuits and calling out local preachers to fill them. Whenever he found a young man of piety and native talent he led him out into the Lord's vineyard. Large as his district was, it soon became too small for him. He extended his labors to every part of south-western Virginia, then, crossing the Ohio River, he carried the holy war into the State of Ohio. There he formed new charges and called out young men. He in almost every case went before them. They found that he gloried in doing the hardest of the work, and his example inspired them with the same spirit. M'Kendree, like a noble general, was always in the first ranks; followed by such men as Thomas Wilkinson, John Page, Lewis Garrett, and Jesse Walker. Throughout the length and breadth of the West, as far as the country was settled, M'Kendree was first in counsel and first in action. If he appeared on a camp-ground every eye was upon him, and his word was law. In private circles, Quarterly Conferences, and Annual Conferences, he was the master spirit." *

The work continued to spread among the western settlements. As early as 1803 we find a Methodist missionary in that portion of the territory of Indiana now known as the State of Illinois. That missionary was Benjamin Young, a brother of Jacob Young. "His mission embraced all the settlements from the mouth of the Kaskaskia River to Wood River, in Madison County." † Mr. Young has left a brief record of his toils and trials in his mission. It is a letter dated "Indiana Territory, Randolph County, June 1, 1804." He says: "As for the state of religion, it is bad. I have formed a circuit, and five classes of fifty members. In some places there is a revival. About twenty have professed to be converted since I came, but the bulk of the people are given up to wickedness of every kind. Of all places it is the worst for stealing, fighting, and lying. I

* "Autobiography of a Pioneer," the Rev. Jacob Young. Cincinnati, 1857.
† "History of Methodism in Illinois," by the Rev. James Leaton, D.D.

met with great difficulty in coming to this country. I lost my horse in the wilderness, fifty miles from any settlement, and had to walk and hire a horse to go and find mine. The Kickapoo Indians had stolen him and Mr. Reed's, who was with me, but we got them with cost and trouble. When I got to Kaskaskia I preached there, but they made me pay two dollars for the room, and twenty shillings for two days' board. At last the people began to help me. I thank God I can make out, though I have suffered with cold. Last winter my clothes were thin and worn-out, and I had no money to buy new. I trust I am in the way to heaven, and I know my heart is engaged in the work of God." *

As the settlements multiplied in the vast valley of the Mississippi, the new Church extended its lines. Its itinerant missionaries explored the forests and prairies, and bore the Cross at the head of immigration. Scarcely would new neighborhoods be formed and cabins reared, than the Methodist preacher would appear with the offer of Christ to the rustic settlers. Thus Methodism became the most numerous Church in the States which so rapidly rose to greatness and power west of the Ohio.

Asbury watched with profound interest the enlarging borders of the young Church. Though years and infirmities increased upon him, he sighed to behold the frontier work, and to counsel and inspirit the heroes who there braved privations and peril for the cause and glory of the Redeemer. It was not enough that he could write to them messages and encouragement. Nothing but a personal inspection of the work and direct contact with the laborers would satisfy him. When the Church was founded in the province of Maine, he longed to strengthen it by his presence and ministry there. When it entered the Northwest Territory, he was restless to be there. With an enthusiasm which never faltered he pushed out to the remote

* Leaton's "Methodism in Illinois."

fields. Thus, at the close of 1802, he wrote: "Should I live till the year 1804, and should the Conference be held in Maine, I mean to come through to Fort Pitt to visit the new State, formerly the North-west Territory. I wish to visit the northern and western extremities before I die." *

* Autograph letter. He lived long enough to visit the new State a number of times, and to see Methodism become a power in its development.

CHAPTER XX.

GENERAL CONFERENCES OF 1792 AND 1796.

NO preacher's Journal has been published which includes the General Conference of 1796. It was an important convocation in the formative days of the Church. Therefore it seems desirable that such records of the deliberations of that Conference as exist in manuscript should be given to the Church. We therefore insert that portion of the Journal of the Rev. William Colbert, brief as it is, which contains his record of the first and second General Conferences of the new Church. The question, indeed, has been projected whether the General Conference of 1792 was the first that was convened after the Church's organization. As Mr. Wesley requested Dr. Coke to call a General Conference in Baltimore, May 1, 1787, and desired that it should receive Mr. Whatcoat as a Superintendent, it has been urged that the Conference held in Baltimore in that year was a General Conference. This, however, it was not. The request of Mr. Wesley, respecting Mr. Whatcoat, came before the Virginia Conference. It was opposed by James O'Kelly, but the Conference did not approve it. After the Christmas Conference, until 1792, the District Conferences, as they were called, decided such questions as related to the government of the Church. Thus the Council was authorized by those Conferences when it was submitted to them by Bishop Asbury. A measure which received the approval of the District Conferences was of legal force. In his "Reply to O'Kelly," the Rev. Nicholas Snethen introduced the following document as a part of

his refutation of O'Kelly's allegation that Asbury was opposed to a joint Superintendent;

"When T. Coke and Mr. Asbury met in Charleston, T. Coke informed him that Mr. Wesley had appointed Richard Whatcoat as a joint Superintendent, and Mr. Asbury acquiesced in the appointment. T. Coke proposed the appointment to the Virginia Conference, and, to his great pain and disappointment, James O'Kelly most strenuously opposed it, but consented that the Baltimore Conference might decide it, upon condition that the Virginia Conference might send a deputy to explain their sentiments. (Signed,) THOMAS COKE.

"*January* 7, 1792."

The Baltimore Conference did decide the matter, and it is clear that it was not a General Conference, for if it had been such the Virginia Conference would surely not have referred the decision of a question to it, *on condition* that a deputy from said Conference should be allowed "to explain their sentiments." An Annual Conference cannot impose conditions upon a General Conference.

Furthermore, in his "Apology," Mr. O'Kelly said: "Francis proposed for the Baltimore Conference to decide the dispute, to which *we* all agreed." If the Baltimore Conference of 1787 was a General Conference, Bishop Asbury certainly would not have proposed to a District or Annual Conference the reference of the question of the acceptance of a Superintendent designated by Mr. Wesley to it. If there had been a General Conference it would have been its province to determine a matter of such moment independently of any instructions from an Annual Conference.

Again, Mr. Whatcoat's appointment of Superintendent was urged by Dr. Coke at the Virginia Conference, as if that Conference had an authoritative voice in deciding it. This he would scarcely have done if a General

Conference was to convene so soon. Mr. Bruce has furnished the following statement in proof: "Mr. O'Kelly and myself were the only persons who spoke on the subject (at Rough Creek Conference) of receiving a Bishop upon Mr. Wesley's appointment. When the doctor pushed the subject Mr. O'Kelly told him the more he urged the subject the more his fears were alarmed. Mr. Asbury never opened his mouth on the subject while it was in debate. Mr. O'Kelly was to write to the Baltimore Conference."*

It appears entirely clear, then, that no General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held after the Christmas Conference until November 1, 1792.

Of the General Conference of that year the Rev. William Colbert was a member.

In his Journal in manuscript, now in the hands of the author of this volume, he gives very interesting glimpses of men and measures as he viewed them at the time.

Of the General Conference of 1792 he says:

"*Thursday, Nov.* 1. General Conference of the Bishops, elders, and deacons of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in Baltimore. The rules of the house were drawn up to-day and few debates about them.

"*Friday*, 2. It was moved in the General Conference to-day that the power of the Bishop should be so far abridged that in case a preacher could make it appear that the Bishop in his appointment had injured him, by appealing from the Bishop to the Conference, the Bishop should give him an appointment elsewhere; which was seconded and ably defended by O'Kelly, Ivey, Hull, Garrettson, and Swift, and opposed by Reed, Willis, Morrell, Everett, and others.

"*Saturday*, 3. The day spent in debate about the appeal.

"*Sunday*, 4. Dr. Coke preached a delightful sermon from Romans viii, 16. In the afternoon O'Kelly preached

* "Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee."

on Luke xvii, 5. The power of the Lord attended the word. At night Willis preached on Psalm xcv, 10, 11.

"*Monday*, 5. The day spent in debate about the appeal. It was put to vote, but was not carried. This grieved O'Kelly so that he withdrew from the Connection.

"*Tuesday*, 6. The Conference undertook the revisal of the form of Discipline and the duties of elders, deacons, and preachers. From Wednesday, 7, to Thursday, 15, except Thursday, 15, forenoon, I attended Conference. On Wednesday, 14, James Thomas and I were ordained elders and appointed to fill the station of Wyoming and Tioga."

Mr. Colbert's notes of the General Conference of 1796 are more full. The business was probably more varied and the number in attendance greater. The Journal of Colbert, so far as it relates to the General Conference of 1796, is as follows:

"*Thursday*, 20. Began the General Conference. At night Francis Poythress preached from Hebrews iii, 7, 8, and George Roberts, who is an excellent speaker, gave an exhortation.

"*Friday*, 21. At ten o'clock Thornton Fleming preached from Revelation xx, 11–15. At two o'clock the General Conference met and the committee brought before it several things. That which was debated most was whether the probation of the preachers should be lengthened to four years, or stand as it does. It was put to vote and lost, as it ought to be. So it stands as it was. At night Freeborn Garrettson preached on Perfection from Hebrews vi, 10. Valentine Cook exhorted after him. For two nights the exhorters have been by far the best preachers.

"*Saturday*, 22. Shadrach Bostwick preached from Ephesians iii, 8. Solomon Sharp prayed after him with power. I gave a quarter of a dollar for the sight of an elephant, which I expect I had better given to the poor. The prin-

cipal business this afternoon in the General Conference was the subject of the Chartered Fund.

"*Sunday*, 23. This morning a love-feast was held, after which Dr. Coke preached and John Dickins gave an exhortation. In the afternoon George Roberts preached a powerful sermon in the meeting-house in Old Town from 1 Peter iv, 18, and a preacher, by the name of Ray, gave an exhortation after him. At night Dr. Coke preached in the Old Town meeting-house from John xvi, 8–11, which was followed by a lively exhortation.

"*Monday*, 24. Spent the forenoon in writing, and at two o'clock went into the General Conference and heard the debate on the Chartered Fund, the Preacher's Fund, and the Book Fund, which were all thrown into one. I did not attend preaching to-night, but went to the meeting-house, and there was a great stir. I have felt better in my mind to-day than I have for some time past.

"*Tuesday*, 25. Spent in Conference.

"*Wednesday*, 26. Debated, How long a preacher should travel before he was to be considered eligible to the office of an elder? Some wanted it four years, some three years, some two years, and some one year. It terminated in favor of his eligibility to the office of an elder after traveling two years after he is deacon, as a preacher travels two years before he is a deacon.

"*Thursday*, 27. Dr. Coke preached a delightful sermon from Philippians iv, 4, and John Dickins gave us a beautiful exhortation. After the service one of the preachers broke out in an ecstasy of joy, which affected many. It was a time of a gracious shower. For my part I was tendered.

"*Friday*, 28. There was much talk about another Bishop, and in the afternoon Dr. Coke made an offer of himself. It was not determined whether they would receive him; but to-day I suppose there were not a dozen out of a hundred that rejected him by their votes. This gave

me satisfaction. The afternoon was spent debating whether the local deacons should be made eligible to the office of elder, and it went against them. At night George Roberts preached an excellent sermon from Luke xvi, 31, and James Tolles gave an exhortation.

"*Saturday*, 29. The subject of negro slavery was brought forward, and more said in favor of it than I liked to hear.

"*Sunday*, 30. This morning heard Dr. Coke preach in Light Street from Matthew xxv, 41, and in the afternoon at Fell's Point from Isaiah lxvi, 10. It was a time of refreshing at the Point.

Monday, 31. The debate on the subject of slavery resumed, and when put to vote it went in favor of standing as it was. They who hold slaves are to be continued in society.

"*Tuesday*, *Dec.* 2. Debated whether we should continue in society such as distilled spirituous liquors, and whether continue such an order of men in the Church as presiding elders; and when it was ended by a vote, we stand as we were. At night Richard Whatcoat preached from Colossians i, 21, 22, 23. His sermon was followed by an exhortation.

"*Wednesday*, 2. Much said on the manner of trying members; whether the members should by the Church [be adjudged] guilty or not guilty, or the preacher retain or expel them according to his own judgment of the nature of their offense. When it was put to vote, it stands as it was. Much was also said on the subject of marriage. The rule stands with an addition of some explanations.

"*Thursday*, 3. An address in the Minutes of 1795–6 disapproved and the General Conference rose."

The General Conference of 1796 established, for the first time by legislative authority, the boundaries of the Annual Conferences.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AND REVIVAL OF 1800.

IN the early part of the year 1800 a great religious revival was in progress in Cecil Circuit, Maryland, of which the Rev. William P. Chandler, a zealous and able leader, was then the preacher in charge. The Rev. William Colbert, in his Journal of March 14, 1800, says: "Brother Chandler visited us this afternoon and entertained us with many pleasing anecdotes of the work of God in Cecil Circuit." Concerning this work the Centenarian of American Methodism, the venerated Henry Boehm, communicated orally to the author of this volume the following facts, he having labored with Dr. Chandler on the circuit.

"The revival," says Mr. Boehm, "began in Cecil Circuit, Eastern Shore of Maryland, where Dr. Chandler was the preacher in charge. He was a great revivalist. He was very powerful in his appeals to sinners and a mighty instrument in promoting the work of God. He was wise in planning; judicious, skillful, and effective in executing; so that the revival was under the most able management. A great deal depends upon the arrangement of matters in revivals, and Chandler was a general. The work spread through the whole peninsula; over many counties it rushed like fire. Every-where there was intense excitement. Chandler, as the master spirit, went to and fro preaching and guiding the movement. The meetings at numerous places were held daily. People frequently fell, as if pierced through the head by a bullet. I was an actor in this remarkable revival, and I have seen strong men, in attempting to go out of the meeting, fall as if slain

in battle. Dr. Chandler was the first I knew to adopt the plan of inviting seekers to the mourner's bench. * I was

* The Mourner's Bench is invested with most sacred associations in American Methodism. At the mourner's bench multitudes found the peace of God. The word "altar" conveys the same idea in this day, and it is employed in all or nearly all revivals in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The question is of some interest, when and by whom was the practice of inviting awakened persons to the mourner's bench introduced? It is probably not possible to answer that question with certainty. The Rev. Jesse Lee gives, in his Journal, the following record: October 31, 1798, in Virginia, he says: "At Paup's meeting-house Mr. Asbury preached on Eph. v, 25, 26, 27. He gave us a good discourse. Then I exhorted, and the power of the Lord was among us. Many wept and some cried aloud with deep distress. Then Miles Harper exhorted and dismissed the assembly. The class was desired to remain. Brother Mead began to sing, and in a little while many were affected and a general weeping began. John Easter proclaimed aloud, 'I have not a doubt but God will convert a soul to-day.' *The preachers then requested all that were under conviction to come together.* Several men and women came and fell upon their knees, and the preachers for some time kept singing and exhorting the mourners to expect a blessing from the Lord, till the cries of the mourners became truly awful. Then prayer was made in behalf of the mourners, and two or three found peace." Mr. Boehm witnessed the gathering of penitents at a place or seat to which they were invited as early as about 1800. At a meeting in Delaware, mentioned by the Rev. William Colbert, the mourners were invited "forward." Mr. Colbert says: "After love-feast, Brother Cooper preached under the shades from Acts ii. 4. Caleb Boyer exhorted after him, but to a restless congregation. He spoke on the subject of a collection that was made. I sang and made some observations on the disorderly behavior of the congregation and went to prayer. After prayer I CALLED UPON THE PERSONS IN DISTRESS TO COME FORWARD and look to the Lord to convert their souls. Numbers came forward, and repaired to the meeting-house, where we spent some time with them in prayer and left them engaged." This was Sunday, May 24, 1801, in Delaware. Mr. Colbert gives another instance of invitation to penitents on April 18, 1802. The house at St. Martin's, he says, "before we got there was crowded, and a very large number out-of-doors. We fixed a table at the door, and Brother Ryan preached from 1 Peter ii, 25. Brother Boehm spoke after him with great power, and after him I spoke. I thought it very remarkable that the people stood so long in the rain to hear the word of God. It continued raining during the public meeting. It kept us back with our love-feast a long time. Seeing no prospect of better weather in a seasonable time, after waiting long, we requested the people to depart that we might hold our love-feast. A blessed time we had. Many spoke feelingly, and *a great*

engaged in the work when this was done. It was a great advantage because, with the seekers scattered all through the congregation, it was difficult to give them suitable attention. By bringing them together they were accessible to those who desired to instruct and encourage them. In the early part of the revival I saw twelve men kneel at the mourner's bench, and they were all quickly converted. One of them was Lawrence Laurenson, for many years an able minister of the Philadelphia Conference.

"The meetings were characterized by great earnestness and feeling. Sometimes the excitement would arrest the preaching, the people crying for mercy and the Christians praying and talking to the mourners. The conversions were generally very clear. Often the converts would rise and praise the Lord; sometimes they would shout aloud, and sometimes be melted into silence and tears. Into this work the whole membership entered. I have often seen members on their knees agonizing in prayer for a deeper work of grace, and then rise and shout as if just converted. The members labored among the people in the congregation, exhorting and pointing them to the Saviour. Several thousand souls were gathered into the Church on the peninsula during this great revival, and among the converts were many leading families, who became pillars of the Church. From Cecil Circuit, where the work began, it spread to Baltimore."

On the 6th of May, 1800, the third General Conference,

number of mourners came to join us in prayer WHEN THE INVITATION WAS GIVEN. Glory to God! there was a glorious display of power. Several rose up praising the Lord." The Rev. Henry Smith says: "In looking over my diary I find the following notice: 'Sunday, May 29, 1803, I preached at Frontrayel. I met the class, having invited all who wished to serve the Lord to stay with us. Eight or ten did so. After I had spoken to the class I opened a door to receive members into the society. None seemed disposed to join. I then proposed to pray for those who were mourning to know the love of God if they would come forward and kneel down. Eight or ten came.'"

after the one at which the Church was organized, was convened in the city of Baltimore. The business of the Conference and the revival progressed together. The awakening, according to Mr. Boehm, began in Baltimore as a result of persons from that city attending a quarterly meeting on Cecil Circuit. When they returned they took the fire with them. The General Conference gave an impulse to the movement. The members entered heartily into the work. The divine influence fell upon the congregations with overwhelming effect. Some would fall to the floor, others to their knees. At times the excitement threatened to break up the business of the Conference. It swept over the whole city, and many were saved. *

Preachers from various sections of the country were at the General Conference. Mighty leaders of the Church were there. Philip Bruce, a graceful and yet powerful preacher, who "excelled in the application of Gospel truth," and whose "appeals were often irresistible," was there. It is said that Bishop Asbury, in Winchester, Virginia, once said to Bruce: "Philip, I intend to pile up the brush to-night, and you must set it on fire." When the pointed, plain sermon of Asbury was finished, "Bruce arose and delivered a most powerful exhortation, which told with overwhelming effect upon the congregation. The Bishop's brush-heap blazed at the touch of Philip's torch." † Ezekiel Cooper, whose youthful voice sounded the Gospel invitation in the marvelous revival in Baltimore, in 1789, was there. Nicholas Snethen, Jesse Lee, Richard Whatcoat, Laurence Mansfield, Thomas Lyall, Jonathan Forrest, George Pickering, Ephraim Chambers, William Ormond, Lasley Matthews, Daniel Fidler, Thomas Morrell, John Chalmers, George Roberts, John Bloodgood, William P. Chandler, Lawrence M'Combs,

* These statements I wrote from the lips of the Rev. Henry Boehm in the latter part of 1874. His recollection of those events was quite clear.

† Bennett's "Methodism in Virginia," p. 182.

John M' Claskey, Thomas F. Sargeant, William M'Kendree, William Burke, and others were there. With such men of might to lead the conquering forces, it is not surprising that Baltimore trembled during that General Conference, nor that they spread the hallowed fire abroad as they went forth from that Jerusalem of Methodism.

The Journal of Mr. Colbert gives but a few glimpses of the revival scenes in Baltimore. Indeed, his record of the work of the General Conference is meager. Yet he opens to our view some of the events and actors of that great occasion. He says:

"*Tuesday*, 6, [May, 1800.] Our General Conference commenced. The day was spent in making the rules of the house. At night Jesse Lee preached on Luke xix, 27.

"*Wednesday*, 7. Brother Whatcoat preached on 1 Chronicles iv, 10, after which Dr. Coke gave us a very glorious account of the work of God in Ireland.

"*Thursday*, 8. I attended the Conference, but did not go to preaching at night.

"*Friday*, 9. Yesterday was the day we voted for a Bishop,* and to-day was kept as a day of fasting and prayer on that occasion. At night Dr. Coke preached on Genesis v, 24.

"*Saturday*, 10. A very warm debate took place to-day on a very important subject—whether the new Bishop should have as much power in the government of the Church as the old Bishop—being a motion of Laurence Mansfield. It was, as it ought to be, rejected, as having a decided tendency to divide the Connection.†

"*Sunday*, 11. This forenoon Bishop Asbury preached

* Mr. Colbert, no doubt, means that the Conference voted to add another Bishop to the episcopal force.

† The Journal of the General Conference of 1800 says, page 36: "Brother Mansfield moved that the Bishops shall have full and equal jurisdiction in all and every respect whatever."

on James i, 25, in the meeting-house in Light Street. In the afternoon Thomas Lyall preached at Mr. Otterbein's on 2 Peter i, 5: 'Add to your faith, virtue.' His powers of oratory are great, indeed.* At night Dr. Coke preached.

"*Monday*, 12. This morning was elected that venerable old man, Richard Whatcoat, to the office of a Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church. There were one hundred and fifteen votes, of which he had fifty-nine. Jesse Lee, fifty-six."† At night I heard Philip Bruce preach part of a sermon. After him Brother Higby gave an exhortation. One woman professed to be converted.

"*Tuesday*, 13. Much time has been spent to-day on a system of finance. At night Jonathan Forrest, an old veteran, gave us a sermon on Matthew iv, 17. After him Brother M'Combs gave an exhortation. A great work broke out; eight or ten professed to be converted. Ephraim Chambers preached in the afternoon at Friend Bruff's.

"*Wednesday*, 14. A motion passed into a law that a suspected member should be allowed a trial by jury.

"*Thursday*, 15. After taking a morning walk, the subject of negro slavery was debated, but nothing done to purpose.

"*Friday*, 16. Negro slavery debated again to-day in Conference, but nothing done further than agreeing on drawing up an address to the State legislators. At night I heard Brother Hardesty preach on Psalm cxix, 126. Brother Timmons gave an exhortation.

"*Saturday*, 17. There was a long debate to-day in the

* Mr. Lyall subsequently withdrew from the Church and became an Episcopal rector in the city of New York.

† The Journal of the General Conference gives the votes of this election as follows: "The Conference proceeded to the election of a Bishop; the first poll being a tie, and supposed defective. Upon the second there were fifty-nine votes for Brother Richard Whatcoat, fifty-five for Brother Jesse Lee, and one blank; the whole number of voters being one hundred and fifteen: whereupon Brother Richard Whatcoat was declared duly elected."

Conference on the subject of making local deacons eligible to the office of elders, but did nothing.

Sunday, 18. This morning wet; Dr. Coke preached a sermon in Light Street meeting-house on Revelation ii, 3. In the evening I drank tea with Dr. Coke, Philip Bruce, George Pickering, and Thomas Lyall at John Chappell's, where I lodged, No. 39 Bridge Street. At night I heard Ezekiel Cooper preach at Light Street meeting-house an excellent sermon on Matthew xxiv, 14.

"*Monday*, 19. The forenoon was taken up on the book business; and the greater part of the afternoon in a debate on the subject of marriage; but the old rule stood by a considerable majority.* William Ormond preached at night. At the time of prayer a great shout broke out.

"*Tuesday*, 20. In Conference the order of the day was the book business, with which the General Conference closed. At night I heard Lasley Matthews preach on Jeremiah viii, 20: 'The harvest is past,' etc."

It appears that a number of the preachers continued at Baltimore after the adjournment of the General Conference, engaged, perhaps, in the work of the revival. On Sunday, the 25th, the Conference having closed the Tuesday preceding, Mr. Colbert, who had been absent from the city, was again there, and says: "I heard Dr. Coke preach three times to-day: in the morning at Light Street meeting-house on Colossians iii, 3, 4; in the afternoon at Fell's Point on Matthew vi, 20, 21; and at night on Matthew vi, 33, at Old Town. In the morning Thomas Morrell sung and prayed for him; in the afternoon Philip Bruce, and in the evening myself."†

Bishop Whatcoat, in his Journal, notices the revival that prevailed during the General Conference. He says: "We

* That rule forbade the marriage of a member of the Church with an irreligious person. The fathers of the Church would have no fellowship with the world.

† The Rev. William Colbert's Journal in manuscript.

had a most blessed time, and much preaching, fervent prayers, and strong exhortations through the city, while the high praises of God resounded from street to street, and from house to house, which greatly alarmed the citizens. It was thought that not less than two hundred were converted during the sitting of our Conference."

Mr. Colbert was at the notable Duck Creek Conference which began a few days after the close of the General Conference, and there the revival scenes were extraordinary. Indeed, at that Conference the spiritual interest was absorbing. The revival, which had swept over Cecil Circuit and into Baltimore, burst out at the Conference at Duck Creek (now Smyrna, Delaware) marvelously, and spread abroad over the land. The new Church now entered upon a period of triumph and of glory far surpassing, in the extent of its results, any which it had previously known. At Duck Creek Mr. Colbert says:

"*Sunday*, *June* 1. I heard Bishop Whatcoat preach an excellent sermon from Revelation xi, 18, after which we had a good love-feast.

"*Monday*, 2. Opened Conference. At night Brother Turck was to preach, but they shouted too much for him to get the opportunity.

"*Tuesday*, 3. David Bartine* preached at night on 1 Thessalonians v, 19. There was a great shout almost all night.

"*Wednesday*, 4. A warm debate in Conference on

* Mr. Bartine was the father of the late eloquent Dr. David Wesley Bartine, whose pleasing and powerful proclamation of the Gospel has thrilled and moved great audiences at camp-meetings, dedications, etc., in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, Maryland, Indiana, and Illinois. Of handsome person, melodious voice, fine imagination, fluent utterance, excellent diction, graceful manner, warm sensibilities, and cultivated intellect, he, for more than forty years, adorned the pulpit of Methodism, and was the instrument of the salvation of many souls. On his death-bed, in Trenton, New Jersey, he said, "All is bright above," and "it is the old, old story, of Jesus and his love." He died August 13, 1881,

where the next Conference shall be. A petition was presented and headed by the governor of the State of Delaware in favor of its being at Duck Creek and Dover. L. M'Combs, J. Lee, W. P. Chandler, and Foster were in favor of the petition; Cooper, Chambers, Robertson, Kindle, Justis, Bartine, and myself against it. Left undetermined. At night Richard Swain preached on Romans viii, 1.

"*Thursday*, 5. It was decided that the Conference should be at Philadelphia. The votes were forty-five.* At night we had a glorious meeting.

"*Friday*, 6. We had happy meetings to-day. Thank God! Souls have been converted. The meetings held till near two o'clock.

"*Saturday*, 7. I preached in the meeting-house on Matthew xxv, and part of the 34th verse. Three professed to get converted. The meeting held till near two o'clock.

"*Sunday*, 8. A glorious day. Joseph Everett preached in the morning on 2 Corinthians, v, 19. In the afternoon Johnson Dunham preached on Romans v, 9. William Bishop exhorted. At night Ephraim Chambers preached on Revelation ii, 17. One hundred and eight have joined society. Brother Chandler beat up boldly for more volunteers for the Lord."†

Bishop Whatcoat, in his Journal, speaks of the wonderful work of the Lord at this Annual Conference. He says: "On the first of June, we held a Conference at Duck Creek Cross Roads, in the State of Delaware. This was a glorious time. Such a spirit of faith, prayer, and zeal rested on the preachers and people, that I think it exceeded any thing of the kind I ever saw before. O the strong cries, groans, and agonies of the mourners! Enough

* This indicates that the number of preachers at this Conference entitled to vote was about forty-five.

† This expression indicates that Chandler, fresh from the victories of Cecil Circuit, was foremost in directing the revival at the Duck Creek Conference.

to pierce the hardest heart; but, when the Deliverer set their souls at liberty, their ecstasies of joy were inexpressibly great, so that the high praises of the Redeemer's name sounded through the town, until solemnity appeared on every countenance; the effect of which was that, on the Thursday following, one hundred and fifteen persons joined the society in that town, while the divine flame spread through the adjacent societies."

On the 20th of June, 1800, George Kinard wrote the Bishops from Duck Creek concerning the work there: "On the Sabbath after you left here," he says, "about one hundred and nine * came forward and begged to be admitted to our society. They were directed to meet two days after, to be taken in, when they and six others joined society, many of whom were soundly converted to God, and the principal part of the others deeply penitent and seeking for mercy. Two others have since applied, making in all one hundred and seventeen souls in and around this little village. We had previously joined fifty souls since the commencement of the new year, making the whole one hundred and sixty-seven. We have now about three hundred members in this small town, and the work still going on. Who can calculate the great good done at our last Conference, when we discover such prodigious advantages to the inhabitants here? There is also a great ingathering in all the societies near this place."

The revival soon became general. East, west, north, and south, the displays of grace were glorious. Jonathan Jackson, who was presiding elder of a district in Virginia, which included the circuits where the pentecostal visitation of 1787 was enjoyed, wrote, August 20, 1800, to the Bishop: "I have been round the district, and, glory be to God! I have seen very good and gracious times in all the circuits. In many parts of Bertie and Cumberland they have great and

* Colbert, as we have seen, gives the number definitely as one hundred and eight.

powerful times. Many have been awakened and added to the Church; I expect not less than two hundred. The preachers were all much engaged in the Lord's work. The local preachers in general seem to be very zealous and useful."

From New England there were also grateful tidings. John Broadhead, one of the presiding elders, wrote September 19, 1800, that "on every circuit* there is some revival."

The work in New England seems to have been coincident in its origin with the great revival in Maryland. Shadrach Bostwick, a powerful evangelist, wrote, three weeks before the dawn of the year 1800, of "the most glorious times I have seen in New England." He describes scenes similar to those which occurred in the South. "At our Middle Haddam quarterly meeting," says Mr. Bostwick, "which was the first for this circuit this year, the Lord came down in mighty power. Many were struck and fell from their seats prostrate upon the floor, crying in bitter agonies, some for converting and others for sanctifying grace. It happened well that Brother M'Combs and myself had been formerly favored with such scenes in the South, and well knew what to do. The New London friends carried the flame into the city, and this brought on a quickening there. About sixteen members joined in one day and many more in the circuit. Old Tolland Circuit, that formal, dry one, has taken the start. Our first quarterly meeting was at Hartford, five miles. The power of the Lord came down and scarcely left a dry eye in the house! Two or three professed to be converted, and five continued on their knees, begging for mercy, for near three hours.† The work has spread rapidly in South Wilbraham. About twenty souls have been brought into liberty there, and still the Lord is working. We have a little society there. Our

* Broadhead probably spoke only of his own district.

† This scene, in 1799, is suggestive of the mourner's bench.

second quarterly meeting in that circuit was in North Wilbraham chapel, and truly it was a time of joy and rejoicing. Three professed to be converted, and the whole congregation appeared to be melted into tears. The work has so increased and enlarged that we have made a four weeks' circuit of it." *

Brodhead, in his report from New England in the fall of 1800, says that "at Vershire quarterly meeting the Lord was present indeed. At this meeting there were about fifteen hundred people. On the Sabbath we had to preach in the open air. Several found Jesus, and others, who had already believed, were filled with his power. At Wethersfield we had a good time. The work had begun on that circuit. A goodly number have joined. At Chesterfield quarterly meeting some appeared to be awakened. I have heard since that seven have been converted in that place. At Pomfret quarterly meeting the power of the Lord was felt indeed, and one or two found peace with God. New London quarterly meeting was still greater. Sinners were awfully alarmed, and I think four professed to find the Lord. At Tolland quarterly meeting it was a great time. The Saturday meeting lasted till three o'clock on Sabbath morning. Some professed to experience sanctification, and during the quarterly meeting several were awakened. I believe much good was done."

The revival continued in the South, especially in the Peninsula, "pervading the whole" of it, says Thomas Ware. Ware was, in 1800, placed in charge of the district which comprised that large territory. He says the religious excitement attending this wonderful work was "the greatest I ever saw in an itinerant life of more than forty years. To describe the scenes I witnessed at Back Creek, Smyrna, Dover, Chestertown, Centreville, Easton,

* "Extracts of Letters containing some Account of the Work of God since the year 1880. Written by the preachers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church to their Bishops." New York, 1805.

Cambridge, Milford, and Lewistown,* would far exceed any ability I ever possessed. Should it be inquired, 'What could draw thousands of all ranks to attend the above-named places, and spend at some of them one whole week in acts of devotion, forgetful of all worldly concerns?' I reply, They came expecting to find the Lord there, and their expectations were realized to their joy and entire satisfaction. Returning from these extraordinary meetings, they told what they had seen, heard, and felt. By this means similar expectations were excited in others, who came also, and these, in their turn, went their way and reported that the half had not been told them.

"This work was confined to the Methodists. There were but few clergymen of any other denominations within the bounds of our district, and not one of these, to my knowledge, joined heartily with us. They did not offer much opposition, nor was it worth their while so to do. The tide set too strongly in the Methodist channel to be diverted by their joint efforts into another, or to be retarded in its rapid course.

"Lewistown had long been to us very inaccessible; but now at length a cry arose among the inhabitants of this dissipated town, 'What must we do to be saved?' It was at a quarterly meeting held there in the summer of 1801. At this meeting there were present a large number of the inhabitants of Lewistown. Our subject on Sunday was 'Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.' Dr. Chandler followed with an exhortation, when many were prostrated on the floor."

From this well-fought field Ware had already written, March 4, 1801, a dispatch of victory: "I have now been three times around my district," he says, "and have had an opportunity of knowing the people with regard to times and seasons. I have not known a people, take them collect-

* Some of these towns are in the State of Delaware. The others are in Maryland.

ively, so completely Methodized as these. What would they not have been had slavery never been introduced among them? On Dover, Milford, and Somerset we have had about fifteen hundred added since Conference." *

The glorious movement continued also in Baltimore. That zealous and powerful leader of the victorious hosts, George Roberts, remained at his post during the summer of 1800, notwithstanding the prevalence of the deadly epidemic of yellow fever. December 11, of that year, he writes from Baltimore: "God has spared me through a perilous affliction. Hundreds fell on my right hand and on my left. Nothing but a sense of duty prompted me to stand at my post. When I reflect upon the sweet communion I had with God, and that our church was the only one open for worship; that hundreds flocked to hear me that never were accustomed to our church before, and the most of them continued steady hearers ever since; when I look around now at our congregations and find in Light Street that we have more than two thousand steady hearers, while the houses of other denominations are comparatively deserted; when I reflect that a few in the tremendous hour of death were hopefully set at liberty to praise the God of their salvation; finally, when I think of the testimony of some that I was serviceable to their bodies as well as their souls when they were deserted by their dearest friends in that dreadful hour, I do not regret that I stayed in the city, but feel thankful to God who inspired me with the resolution."

Brave men, indeed, were those Methodist preachers, who not only dared the savage-infested wilderness, but also the perils of the pestilence-smitten city. No grander heroes are found in the records of martyrs than Dickins, who, in Philadelphia, encountered one yellow-fever scourge after another, until he fell with the plague at his post, ex-

* That is, since the Duck Creek Conference, where the work was so great at its session in June 1800.

claiming, "Glory! glory!" and Roberts in Baltimore, who, in pulpit and at bedside, continued to preach Christ Jesus amid the awful perils of the pestilence; and who, when at last he came to die in that same city, shouted so loudly his Redeemer's praise that his son suggested that he had better not thus exhaust his strength, but whisper. The triumphant hero answered: "Let angels and archangels whisper, but had I a voice of seven thunders I would awake all the inhabitants of Baltimore and tell them the greatness of redeeming love."

It is not wonderful that infidelity quailed and fell before the assaults of such men of God; nor that, under the direction of apostolic leaders like Roberts, who counted not their lives dear unto themselves, the Methodist revival movement spread and triumphed over the land.

Philadelphia shared in this great refreshing. Roberts wrote, near the close of 1800: "In Philadelphia, it is said, there is a very great revival of religion, and that near one hundred have been added to the society in two weeks." In October, 1801, the Rev. Richard Sneath wrote from Philadelphia, saying: "January 25, 1801, at St. George's, after Mr. Cooper had done preaching, I invited all the mourners to come to the communion table * that we might pray particularly for them. About thirty professed to be converted, and twenty-six joined the society. The next night a love-feast was kept at Ebenezer. Eighteen persons joined the society. Divine power descended upon the people. Many struggled in the pangs of the new birth, others were in agony of prayer for full sanctification. Our brethren were employed in praying for the mourners or in holding up the feeble minded. I believe upward of twenty-three were truly converted. Many of the old professors were stirred up and felt the purifying fire of divine love. The work continued till the Conference on the first of June. During these seven months

* See foot-note, p. 468.

I joined to the society between five and six hundred members." *

In Baltimore, says Roberts, "we have a considerable ingathering. More or less are hopefully converted every week." At the close of 1800 the Rev. Wilson Lee writes: "In Baltimore the work is moving on. They have great and good times." Lee, who was the presiding elder of the district which included Baltimore, wrote the 18th of March, 1801: "From what I can gather from preachers and leaders, there have been more than one thousand, in the winter and summer past, within the lines of this district, and the work is still moving on in power. The preachers appear to be drinking into the spirit of the work, and the old friends follow on in love. It would have done your heart good to have seen the old friends weeping and praising God with a loud voice when the work of the Lord broke out in Shippensburg, the last visit. I want you to know the Lord is building up the waste places in Zion by raising up young men, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and sending them out in his cause. We have crowded houses. I never saw the people turn out to hear preaching so generally. All glory to God!"

The revival spread widely in the South. The Rev. James Jenkins wrote from South Carolina, June 30, 1802: "Hell is trembling and Satan's kingdom is falling. Through Georgia, North and South Carolina, the sacred flame amidst all the opposition is extending far and wide. I may say with safety that hundreds of sinners have been awakened and converted this year in the above-named States."

From Tennessee also came glorious tidings. The Rev. John M'Gee wrote from Cumberland Settlement, October 27, 1800: "In the latter end of August a quarterly meeting was held at Edwards's Chapel, on the Cumberland side of the ridge, where myself, with four or

* "Arminian Magazine," 1803, p. 373.

five of my brethren of the Methodist ministry were present, at which time many cried aloud from the bitterness of their souls for mercy. A few struggled into spiritual life, while many went away with burdened and sin-sick souls. The next Friday began another sacramental meeting on the ridge, about ten miles from the above place. This was the most glorious meeting that ever my eyes beheld. It continued four days and nights, during which time, from the best accounts we have collected since, there were more than one hundred souls converted to God. It was truly affecting to hear the groans of the spiritually wounded intermingled with the shouts of heaven-born souls. Two weeks after was another sacramental meeting on Blidsoe's Creek, called Shiloh sacrament. Here was great opposition, chiefly from old professors and deists; nevertheless, the Lord worked like himself in power. Sinners were cut to the heart and, falling to the ground, cried for mercy as in the agonies of death, or from the brink of hell, till God spoke peace to their souls; then, rising from the earth with angelic countenances and raptures of joy, gave glory to God with a loud voice. The number converted we are not able to ascertain, but, from the best calculation, there could not be less than sixty or seventy souls. There have been two other meetings since, at each of which there were a goodly number of souls brought in. This work is the Lord's, and to his great name be all the glory. Amen and Amen."

The victories were indeed glorious in the West. M'Kendree writes, October 10, 1801: "We have an addition of three thousand two hundred and fifty. Thus we find that our labors in the Western Conference have been in some degree blessed this year."

The Rev. Thornton Fleming, November 27, 1802, says: "Our last quarterly meeting upon the Ohio Circuit was a time of great power. The work of the Lord began on Saturday night and continued until the breaking of day

upon Sabbath morning. Three professed sanctifying grace and several were converted. Sabbath day, at the supper of the Lord, the power of God came down to my astonishment. I was an eye-witness to the conversion of souls. Indeed, you might look in almost every direction and you would see poor sinners, and the worst of all sinners—backsliders—crying to God for mercy."

In the State of New York the revival spread. William Colbert sent a report of victory from his hard field—the Albany District, in the fall of 1802: "On Herkimer Circuit, on Sunday morning, a little heaven was opened in love-feast, after which we were enabled to speak with a degree of life and power. At the close of the administration of the sacrament the Lord made bare his arm, and sinners were convicted, backsliders were reclaimed, mourners were converted, and many brought to struggle for full redemption in the blood of Jesus. The meeting began at eight o'clock in the morning, and such was the engagedness of the people that it did not end until the setting of the sun on the twentieth."

New Jersey shared in the great awakening. William Mills wrote, June 7, 1802: "The work of God continues to revive, and a general alarm has taken place. In Rockaway Valley the work is powerful, and many are added to the Church. The Lord is threshing the mountains and driving sinners from their lurking places to seek a shelter in the Rock of Eternal Ages."

Thus over the country the revival swept; from all parts of the land rose the shoutings of the triumphant hosts who were pushing on the battles of the conquering Captain of their Salvation and gathering rich spoil for heaven.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE OLD CAMP-MEETINGS.

WE saw the New Church at the opening of the nineteenth century entering upon a period of mighty spiritual conflict and triumph. The ecclesiastical organization had then been only fifteen years in existence, but the zealous and unceasing efforts of its laborers were now to be rewarded with unparalleled success. At its baptism, as a newly-born Church in Baltimore, in 1784, American Methodism, as has been shown, numbered about fifteen thousand members. At its new baptism, in Baltimore, during the General Conference of 1800, its membership numbered nearly sixty-five thousand. In fifteen years, notwithstanding the serious losses resulting from the O'Kelly agitation, its communicants had more than quadrupled, and, therefore, it met the new century in the flush of success and with the prestige of victory.

A revival of spiritual Christianity was then the urgent need of the nation. Infidelity and indifferentism were prevalent, if not dominant, in much of the country. The old English deism had been planted but too effectually in the new world, and the French skepticism which reveled in blood had dashed its crimson and destructive waves against these western shores. The prominence and power of the infidels of the old world reacted adversely to Christianity here. Paine's "Age of Reason" was read and applauded, and the learned and wealthy were too often indifferent or unfriendly to the Bible. The orthodox denominations generally were deficient in aggressive religious power, and, indeed, religious apathy and skepticism had wide sway in the young republic.

A great change, however, was destined to occur. In obscurity God had been preparing a new Church for the great exigence of the new nation. In the fires of opposition and persecution he had tested it, and he had refined and hallowed it in pentecostal flames. He had given to it a ministry composed mostly of young men of apostolic spirit and character, who counted not their lives dear unto them, so that they might finish their course with joy; a ministry who braved the wintry blast and the torrid sun, the scorn of men and the malice of demons, the fatal pestilence and the bloody tomahawk, as in city and in wilderness they hurried in pursuit of perishing sinners; a ministry which, though not greatly polished by literary culture, was "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." An invisible hand now hurled that divinely-anointed ministry and Church against the haughty and defiant phalanx of indifference, skepticism, and sin.

"At the head was Francis Asbury, a revivalist preacher, whose revival zeal had not abated, though he was enfeebled by disease and age, and who brought to the front young men who went into the work with alacrity and joy. If they halted, he found means to quicken their pace. He seemed to have an instinct for religious feelings akin to what Scripture calls discerning of spirits. A large amount of religious joy was outwardly manifested. Hundreds who felt no interest in infidelity needed precisely this kind of evidence of the reality of religion. They could understand the testimony of men to their own religious joys better than argument. It was like the testimony of the blind youth whose sight was restored: 'One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.'

"The great accession of members to the Church, as the fruit of the revival, not only weakened the cause of infidelity, but did a great amount of indirect good. The old Churches were roused into activity. It was charged that this great Methodist revival was fanaticism. That could

not be, as fanaticism is cruelty united with religious zeal. It was not cruelty, but happiness, joyfulness. Their cry was, 'Come to the waters, come!' 'O, taste and see that the Lord is good!' Their chief regard was to the religion of the heart. It was at first controversial preaching. The matter in dispute was antinomianism and formality, but it was soon turned against sin and the sinner. The father of Methodism insisted upon 'Repentance toward God, 'faith toward the Lord Jesus,' 'present salvation from sin,' 'assurance of acceptance with God through the witness of the Spirit,' as the leading points of experimental and practical religion. The uniform teaching of so many preachers in quick succession had a more confirming effect upon the minds of the hearers. They used language which reached the understanding of the many." *

This arousing evangelical movement of Asbury and his laborers gave to the republic its first general and powerful spiritual awakening. It made religious thought and feeling pervasive, if not dominant, in the nation. Whitefield's labors had produced marked effects in some places. The previous revivals of American Methodism had been as the rumble of distant thunder betokening the gathering tempest. Now there was a general outburst of spiritual power which, like the timely rain upon the withering verdure, produced a sudden and happy change in the religious aspect of the country. As its result, multitudes were enrolled upon the lists of Church members; the churches were warmed into fervor, and roused to effort and enterprise; education and benevolence received a strong impulse; organizations for evangelical work sprang into existence; Bible, missionary, and tract societies were organized; Sunday-schools were introduced, and the Church in America rose into a prominence and power which placed it in the van of the regenerating forces of Christendom.

* The Rev. Nicholas Snethen—unpublished works.

Asbury, the greatest religious chieftain of the nineteenth century, was sleepless in superintending and inspiriting his forces. We find him on the western frontiers, then in the South, and then quickly in the Eastern and Middle States. Over the republic he swept disposing the forces, shouting to the charge, and sending dispatches from the field of victory. One such dispatch, by Asbury, from South Carolina, which has not found its way into type, lies before the author of this volume. It is dated December 31, 1802, and says: "Surely God is great and gracious to our Church, and others also. Our preachers are collecting for Conference in Camden. Not a preacher cometh but we hear of good tidings of revivals of religion. At a meeting held at Harrisonburg,* which began at my appointment there last August—the meeting held nine days—one hundred and seven joined in the vicinity of the town, besides many country subjects of grace. Norfolk and Portsmouth towns [Virginia] have had a revival since August of two hundred added, and the work is going on. Baltimore District, Wilson Lee calculated upon an addition of two thousand in about seventeen months. In the Western Conference, three thousand. In this Conference [South Carolina and Georgia] we comfort ourselves we shall have an addition of, we hope, two thousand. In old Virginia, in the three Districts of Alexandria, Richmond, and Norfolk, good news!"†

Bishop Asbury pressed the Church forward to advanced ground in religious experience while he was leading the general charge upon the fortresses of sin. In this same epistle he says: "I am greatly comforted to hear the work of sanctification is prosperous with you, as also in Maryland, east and west. We have not sufficiently preached that part of the Gospel West and South. Indeed, that we believe we ought to preach in a candid and Christian man-

* The first letter of this name is formed like a W. I do not doubt, however, that it was intended to be written *Harrisonburg*. † Autograph letter.

ner, even Christian perfection and Christian baptism. But we should always keep a Christian temper of mind; observe as much forbearance as we can to those that differ from us." *

Of the special means that were employed in this widespread revival the camp-meeting was chief. It was a means never extensively employed in Christian propagandism until it was called widely into use during the great religious movement in America which began with the nineteenth century. It is, indeed, claimed by the historian of Methodism in South Carolina that camp-meetings were held in North Carolina near the close of the last century. He says: "The first Methodist church in North Carolina, west of the Catawba River, was built in Lincoln county, in 1791, and was called Rehoboth. Before the erection of this church the congregation was accustomed to worship in the grove in the midst of which it was built, and these meetings in the forest resulted in great good and were often continued throughout the day and night. In 1794 the leading male members of the Church consulted together and agreed to hold a camp-meeting in this forest for a number of days and nights. The meeting was accordingly appointed, and was conducted by Daniel Asbury, William M'Kendree, Nicholas Watters, and William Fulwood, who were efficiently aided by Dr. James Hall, a celebrated pioneer preacher among the Presbyterians in Iredell County. The success of this first camp-meeting, at which it was estimated that three hundred souls were converted, led to the appointment of another the following year at Bethel, about a mile from the famous Rock Spring; and subsequently of yet another by Daniel Asbury and Dr. Hall, which was known as the great Union Camp-meeting, at Shepherd's Cross Roads, in Iredell County. The manifest blessing of God upon these meetings resulting in the con-

* Autograph letter of Bishop Asbury in possession of the family of the Rev. William Colbert.

version of hundreds of souls, gave them great favor with the Presbyterians and the Methodists, and caused them to be kept up continuously in the South Carolina Conference." *

The camp-meeting has commonly been believed to have resulted from the great sacramental meetings held by the Presbyterians, and participated in by the Methodists, in Kentucky and Tennessee about the close of the last century. Dr. Shipp, however, states that "John M'Gee, whose name is associated with the origin of camp-meetings in the West," was for years a traveling preacher in the South; he "located in 1793, and remained in a section of country where camp-meetings had become well known and popular until 1798, when he removed and settled in Sumner County, in Tennessee. It was a great service rendered the Church at large when he transferred these meetings from the Catawba River to the banks of the Red River, in Kentucky, and the Cumberland River, in Tennessee, and five years after their origin made known practically to the western country an instrumentality by which, under the blessing of God, thousands were brought to the knowledge of salvation." †

Bishop Asbury promptly and skillfully appropriated whatever agency in his view promised to promote the progress of the Church. He saw in the camp-meeeting such an agency. His sagacious mind perceived quickly how it could be employed in advancing the revival that was spreading over the land. As early as the close of 1802 he wrote: "The South Carolina and Georgia camp-meetings have been blessed to the souls of hundreds, and have furnished members to the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptist Churches." ‡

This statement of Asbury is suggestive of united effort

* Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina," p. 272.

† "Methodism in South Carolina," p. 272.

‡ Autograph Letter of Asbury.

by the three denominations he names in the work of camp-meetings. It is, indeed, clear that such meetings were employed by the Presbyterians in that day. The Rev. Mark Moore wrote, in the same month the above statement of the Bishop was written, that "about the second Sabbath in July [1802, probably] the Presbyterians appointed a camp-meeting at the Grassy Spring, upon the Tyger River, to which the Methodists were invited and made welcome. The people collected on Friday and formed a small square camp in a well-covered forest. Here we had a season of mercy indeed. On Friday afternoon there were some tokens of the Divine presence. On Saturday afternoon several were struck to the ground and made to cry bitterly for mercy. Sabbath afternoon was also a gracious season. Some were laid low by the power of God, and several professed justification. The old Methodists' children shared largely in the blessings of this meeting."

Asbury eagerly seized upon this novel but potent agency for advancing revivals, and promoted its extension. He saw that it had a great adaptation to develop spiritual results. He wrote of it in words which show that he understood its philosophy as early as 1802. "I think well of large meetings," he says; "camp and quarterly meetings. The more preachers to preach and pray, and so many of God's people, and so many people that need conversion, and so many of the children of God's children present, we may hope for great things in the nature of things."* Nine years later, namely, in 1811, he wrote: "Our camp-meetings, I think, amount to between four and five hundred annually, some of which continue for the space of six or eight days. It is supposed that it is not uncommon for ten thousand persons, including all who come at different periods, to be present at one of those meetings. On such occasions many

* Autograph letter of Bishop Asbury.

become subjects of a work of grace, and many experience much of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Backsliders are restored, and the union of both preachers and people is greatly increased."* Thus, in a few years from the time Asbury adopted the camp-meeting as an arm of the Church, he saw its effects throughout the land in swaying multitudes toward heaven. When, in 1802, he wrote of it approvingly, the Methodist Episcopal Church numbered eighty six thousand seven hundred and thirty-four members. When, in 1811, he wrote of the great number and success of the camp-meetings, the membership of the Church had grown to one hundred and eighty-four thousand five hundred and sixty-seven. In other words, the membership had in those nine years doubled, with an excess beyond of ten thousand members. The sagacity of Asbury and the promptness and earnestness with which he extended this new agency are shown by the following statement of Mr. Zachary Myles, of Baltimore, to his brother, the Rev. William Myles, of London, January 11, 1803: "Mr. Asbury was present at some of the camp-meetings in Carolina and Georgia. Two hundred wagons came with people and provisions, and they stayed together nine days in the woods, during which time religious exercises continued day and night. Mr. Asbury wrote word to our preachers to make preparation for the erection of a camp within two miles of this city at our next Conference in April." In August, 1804, Asbury wrote to Mr. Myles of his purpose concerning their further extension. He says: "We are about to introduce camp-meetings in the State of New Jersey and New York, which will commence, please God, next month, and, we hope, will be attended with a blessing."†

Many of the camp-meetings held in the life-time of Asbury and subsequently were among the most extraordinary

* "Arminian Magazine," London, 1812, p. 316.

† "Arminian Magazine," London, 1805, p. 46.

religious occasions of the century. They were great in respect of the multitudes assembled, the sacred eloquence displayed, and the religious results achieved. There was an impressiveness about the worship in the forest temples that moved the pious mind to intenser devotion and subdued the gay and the trifling to serious thoughtfulness. Tens of thousands were converted by the direct instrumentality of camp-meetings, and thousands more through their indirect influence. The novelty of this form of religious aggression attracted vast numbers who were indifferent or averse to public worship, and many who "went to laugh remained to pray."

The first camp-meeting in Maryland was, it is said, projected by the Rev. Nicholas Snethen, in 1803. Mr. Snethen had observed the camp-meeting in the South the previous year. Mr. Zachary Myles wrote his brother in 1803 of Mr. Snethen's views of the Southern camp-meeting: "Mr. Snethen says, 'The scene by night was solemn and novel. The lofty trees, and the light from the different fires, with the stands for preaching, were awfully pleasing. Fifteen of our preachers were present, besides Baptist and Presbyterian ministers. All were engaged at once on religious subjects, and many happy conversions took place.'"

One of these meetings in Georgia, in 1802, is described by the Rev. Stith Mead, in a letter to the Bishop. "Your appointments," he says, "were formed into a joint camp-meeting with the Presbyterians, which commenced on Thursday, the 11th, and closed Monday, November 15th, near Lexington, Oglethorpe County. The outlines of this encampment were near a mile around. The first day was mostly taken up in pitching tents, some cutting down trees, some carrying off, others raising boards. About noon I was directed to open the meeting, which I endeavored to do from Revelation xiv, 6, 7, at one stage, and Henry Moss at the other. Friday night the bounds of the

ground were thickly stowed with camps. The number that attended on this occasion is computed from eight to ten thousand, the number of carriages at two hundred and fifty; preachers, twenty-five; Methodists, fifteen—itinerants, five; local, ten; Presbyterians, four; Episcopalians, one; Baptists, five. The conversion of souls began on Friday night, and the exercise increased day and night during our stay on the ground. It is impossible to ascertain with any degree of precision the number converted on this occasion, but I suppose from one hundred to one hundred and fifty. Many at the close, unable to help themselves, were put into wagons and carried home." Mr. Mead states that there had previously been several camp-meetings in Georgia, "where Jehovah presided in majesty and power, and many were brought to God."

From Carolina the Rev. Jonathan Jackson, presiding elder of the Newbern District, wrote, December 16, 1803: "The greatest times we have had have been at our camp-meetings. Great pains have been used to prevent irregularities and disorder, which has so far won the hearts of the people to them that they want camp-meetings almost every-where. It is impossible to tell the good that has been done at them; for while some have been crying for mercy, others shouting the praises of the Most High, there would not be a sinner found who would open his mouth against the work. In the lower part of the district we have had the greatest seasons that have ever been seen."

Of the reputed first camp-meeting in Maryland, in 1803, of which Nicholas Snethen was the chief originator, glowing descriptions have been given. It was an occasion of extraordinary spiritual power. The presiding elder of the district, the Rev. Wilson Lee, said of it: "There was a glorious season at the camp-meeting at Reistertown."

The eloquent Samuel Coate was at the time stationed in Baltimore, and attended this camp-meeting, which was held in Taggart's woods, near Reistertown, about fifteen

miles from Baltimore. Some of the most important work of his extraordinary ministry seems to have been done at camp-meetings, and he graphically described this noted camp-meeting of 1803. Mr. Coate says: "It began on the 24th of September, and continued three days and nights with scarcely an hour's intermission. It was held in a grove or forest, in a very retired situation, with only one blind road leading to it. There was a stand erected in the midst of a piece of ground containing three or four acres, and round this the tents, wagons, carts, coaches, stages, and the like, were arranged in a circular form. Fires were kindled in the front of the tents to accommodate those who lodged in them. The number who encamped on the ground were not more than two or three hundred. This was owing partly to fear of catching cold, and partly to a prejudice they had taken against camp-meetings. From these considerations it is possible we had not as many preachers as we otherwise should have had, but there were twenty or more traveling and local.

"Our number on the week-days was from one thousand to fifteen hundred, and about five thousand or upward on the Sabbath. Although there were so many, I never saw better order in a crowded concourse in any place. It appeared that they were awed into reverence, for although there was a great shout of a King in the camp, I turned my eyes in every direction over the whole multitude, and could scarcely perceive a smile upon one countenance.

"The order of our religious exercises was as follows: A horn was blown in the morning to collect the people to a general prayer-meeting at eight o'clock. Preaching was at ten o'clock in the afternoon, and at night. One sermon was preached at each time, and two or three exhortations were delivered. Many fell down slain with the sword of the Spirit, and groaned like men dying in the field of battle, while rivers of tears ran down their cheeks. We had a number of souls blest on Saturday and through

the Sabbath; but on the evening of the Sabbath and the Monday following were the most glorious times my eyes ever saw. If we spoke to any of the by-standers they were melted down like wax before the fire. I seldom if ever saw a more remarkable hungering and thirsting after holiness of heart among the professors. They were deeply and powerfully convinced of the necessity of sanctification, and this greatly increased the convictions among sinners. O, my brother, if you had been there, you would have been pleasingly astonished! On the one hand you would have seen a poor sinner leaning with his head against a tree with tears running from his eyes like drops of rain upon the ground and somebody going and pointing him to the Lamb of God upon the cross. On the other hand you would have seen a whole group of people, and from the midst of them you would have heard the piercing outcries of the broken-hearted penitent; and to turn your eyes in another direction you would see a gray-headed father and his children crying to God to have mercy upon their souls. In the meantime you would have seen some groaning under as deep distress and agony of heart to be cleansed from all unrighteousness as ever you saw any under the guilt of unpardoned sin. I could have led you from that to a place where the divine blessing was manifested similar to the glory which appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation when the wandering Israelites fell upon their faces and shouted. It was a tent filled with happy souls, to the number of fourteen or fifteen, who had either been converted, sanctified, or had received some remarkable blessing that day. While standing near that favored spot you would have beheld a sight enough to transport the mind of an angel. The crowd parting, you would have seen three or four persons advancing toward you bearing along a poor heavy-laden sinner, who had been lying helpless upon the ground, groaning bitterly to Heaven, being overwhelmed with sorrow of heart and the

dreadful onsets of guilt and fear. You would have seen him or her, with the head on one shoulder, borne along by the arms, with the tears streaming copiously, crying, 'Lord, save, or I perish—save, or I sink into hell!' At length, in one of those highly favored tents where the glory of God was manifested, God would break the bars of iron, cut in sunder the gates of brass, set their souls at liberty from every bond and fetter, and fill them with a holy triumph. In the meantime the song of the Lord would be raised in such melodious melting strains from every glad heart and tongue that for a few minutes you would be so absorbed in contemplation and lost in the vision of God's presence, that you would imagine yourself already in paradise. Hosannah in the highest!

> "'Prayer ardent, opens heaven, lets down a stream
> Of glory on the consecrated hour
> Of man in audience with the Deity.'

"No human language is sufficient to describe the joyful emotions that were raised on that occasion, and the glorious displays of the power of saving grace. I was informed that there were not three minutes one whole night but they were in the exercises of singing or prayer. So it continued nearly through the whole meeting, except in time of preaching. As to the number that were convicted, converted, and sanctified, we cannot certainly determine, but we may be safe in conjecturing that there were as many as one hundred or upward."

Mrs. Fanny Lewis, who was the daughter of the Rev. Joseph Toy, a minister of the Baltimore Conference, and an instructor for a time in Cokesbury College, describes this camp-meeting also, and of the last day she says: "On Monday morning there was such a gust of the power of God that it appeared to me the very gates of hell would give way. All the people were filled with wonder, love, and praise. Mr. S[nethen] came and threw himself in our

tent, crying, 'Glory, glory! this is the happiest day I ever saw!' He says he never knew such a continual power and increase of the love of God for three days and nights. He calls it 'the happy Monday.' Yes, it was a happy, happy Monday; a day long to be remembered, and a night never to be forgotten. Nor was our parting less glorious than our meeting. Several received perfect love after the meeting broke up. They were under the necessity of dismissing the people for want of preachers; all that were present were worn out.

"Those who were absent know not what they have lost, nor can they form any idea of what we enjoyed. It was none other than the gate of heaven.

"Where, O where shall we begin to praise redeeming Love for the peace and comfort and assurance our souls felt in realizing the promises of an unchangeable Jehovah. Camp-meeting! The very name thrills through every nerve, and almost makes me think I am in the charming woods. Every foot of ground seemed to me sacred. I saw nothing, heard nothing to molest my peace. Not one jarring string. Every thing seemed to combine to promote the glory of God and his Gospel."

The biographer of the Rev. Nicholas Snethen states that in introducing the camp-meeting into Maryland Mr. Snethen proceeded adversely to the counsel of his brethren. The result, however, vindicated his course. Of the meeting Snethen wrote, and his descriptions of it are among the interesting historical documents of the Church. He says: "The congregation on Sunday was vast indeed. About noon the work became visible and general in that part of the crowd where the Christians stood. Three o'clock on Monday morning put a period to the public exercises. We all welcomed the first dawn of the day with joyful hearts. O happy day! O day of mercy and salvation never to be forgotten! Twice I fell prostrate upon the stand beneath the overwhelming power of saving grace. The day is

canonized, it is memorable in the Church to numbers as the happy Monday, the blessed 26th of September, 1803. The number converted cannot be ascertained; but all will agree that there were a hundred or upwards who were subjects of an extraordinary work, either of conviction, conversion, or sanctification."

Nicholas Snethen was one of the greatest pulpit orators of the Church in his day. Before he entered the itinerancy, in 1794, he was a member of the class of John Dow, a well known local preacher, in Belleville, New Jersey. The first four years of his ministry were spent in New England. He was then directed by Bishop Asbury to go South, and was appointed in 1799 to Charleston. In the beginning of 1800 Asbury selected him as a traveling associate and assistant. The Bishop playfully called Snethen "his 'silver trumpet,' in reference to his far-reaching, melodious, and silver-toned voice." *

The General Conference of 1800 appointed a committee to take in charge the material which Asbury had collected for a reply to O'Kelly's attack upon him and the Church. Snethen was a member of that committee and prepared the "Reply." He also published a second pamphlet in answer to the Rejoinder which his first missive called forth from O'Kelly. He thus appeared as the champion of the young Church in its first warfare against the foes of its own house. The Rev Dr. Le Roy M. Lee says: "A careful examination of both of Mr. Snethen's works has left us without surprise that the schism was arrested." †

Snethen filled a large place in American Methodism. Bishop Whatcoat makes the following record in his Journal: "November 1, [1801,] Nicholas Snethen preached morning and afternoon at Augusta, [Georgia.] The people were greatly attracted by Brother Snethen's preaching." Snethen was a chief leader in the agitation in behalf of lay delegation, and, after the adverse action of the

* Unpublished Life of Snethen. † "Life and Times of Jesse Lee," p. 276.

General Conference of 1828 on that subject, he withdrew from the Church and became one of the founders of the Methodist Protestant Church. He located finally in 1814, and died May 30, 1845.

Snethen and Coate, who labored together in Baltimore, in 1803, and whose efforts were united at the first camp-meeting in Maryland, the same year, were a host. Their zeal and their eloquence contributed to the success of camp-meetings in the first years of their history.

We have seen that Asbury proposed that the camp-meeting should be introduced into New Jersey and New York in the year 1804. In September of that year Mr. Snethen, who was then stationed in the city of New York, appeared upon a camp-ground at Carmel, Dutchess County, in that State, where his labors were exceedingly effective. Mr. F. Ward was an eye-witness of that camp-meeting, and he says: "The converting work began with a prayer of Mr. Snethen's, and under his many sermons and exhortations it ran like a fire through the congregations, that numbered on different days from fifteen hundred to seven thousand people. After one of his discourses, from 'God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us,' the cries of the people prevented any further preaching, and the whole of that night the Lord wrought wonderfully, sinners trying to fly from the light of his face, but falling down and unable to escape.

"At the close of another of his sermons from 'Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh,' the God of battles was indeed present, and took the work out of the hands of the ministers, and so wrought that they could only stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. On the occasion of the Lord's Supper Mr. Snethen exhorted with such liberty and force that bursts of rapture shook the grove, and tears of joy flowed down every believer's face." *

*"The Life of Nicholas Snethen, the Methodist Preacher. By his son, Worthington G. Snethen." This biography has not been published.

Among the preachers whose eloquence contributed to the attractiveness and usefulness of the early camp-meetings was Leonard Cassell, of the Baltimore Conference. Mr. Cassell was a very young man and, before he was twenty-five years old, died of yellow fever. His "success in the ministry fully answered to his fame." He possessed rich gifts of imagination and "an easy, graceful elocution. His was the rare talent which renders every subject it touches not only vivid but transparent. He appeared in the pulpit as free from redundancies as defects. The piety of this truly popular preacher was as unsuspected as unimpeachable. The most admirable traits in his character, and which secured to him the public confidence, was his unaffected modesty and humility. That must have been an uncommonly temperate mind which could bear without intoxication so many expressions of public praise and delight. We have never heard it whispered that he showed any symptom of self-gratulation." *

This remarkable young preacher was born in Frederick County, Maryland, April 1, 1784; entered the itinerant ranks in 1802; and departed in triumph, September 26, 1808. "In person he was of middle size, spare, and well made. His features were prominent and accurate, his hair auburn, and complexion fair, with sparkling blue eyes. In mind, conduct, and usefulness he was truly a great man. Considering his age, not twenty-five years, and his education, which was very limited, he may be said to have been a prodigy of genius. A subject dark and mysterious would shine in his hands like the meridian sun. His style was so easy, elevated, and pure, that every word seemed to be exactly fitted to the idea he intended it should convey. He was eminently useful and universally beloved. His voice was generally pitched to that key which indicates earnestness rather than loudness.

"At a certain camp-meeting I attended with him, the men

* "Wesleyan Repository," vol. i.

of the most gentlemanly appearance became disorderly. On Saturday afternoon Mr. Cassell was called to the stand. He began in his best style. In a few minutes he arrested universal attention. He had not proceeded far before tears, sobbing, agitations, and cries became general, and the impulses of his eloquence seemed to redouble at every sentence. The gentry, who had crowded around and were standing in mute astonishment, finding themselves within the range of his well-directed fire, commenced a retreat. At that moment he challenged them to keep their ground, and in a manner, perhaps, never before equaled, even by himself, he exclaimed, 'Give me fifteen minutes more, and then, sinner, run if you can.' Their imaginations were already too much troubled. Their only trust for safety was in flight." *

The Rev. William Colbert was at the great camp-meeting at "the head of Wye" in August, 1807. He states that he reached the ground on Sunday afternoon, "on which thousands were assembled, while Leonard Cassell, from the city of Annapolis, was preaching. He is a good speaker, and what he said was much to the purpose. He was on the 'one thing needful.' It appears that this is one of the greatest meetings ever held by the Methodists in America. Many hundreds, we have the best reason to believe, have been converted." †

The camp-meeting which was held on the Wye camp-ground, in Queen Anne County, Eastern Shore of Maryland, in August, 1809, is historic. At that time Snethen was stationed at Fell's Point, and was invited to attend this camp-meeting. In it he was a leader, and the effect of his eloquence was marvelous. The late Judge Philemon B. Hopper, of Maryland, was there, and has preserved some of its remarkable incidents. He says: "The encampment numbered about three hundred tents, and the daily congregations several thousands. For the first

* "Wesleyan Repository," vol. i. † Colbert's manuscript Journal.

few days the meeting was not marked by any unusual displays of spiritual power, but they were the days of preparation. The Sunday came. On that great day of the feast Mr. Snethen arose and cried with his clear voice, 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.' Then pausing, until all eyes were fixed upon him, he lifted up his voice again in utterance of the text, and this time with such trumpet-like distinctness as to fill every ear in the grove.

"Having thus gained the attention of his hearers, he plunged with them at once right into the middle of his subject, and for thirty or forty minutes he so wrought upon their sympathies that both preacher and congregation seemed like one being—thinking, reasoning, feeling alike, and mounting together upon the swelling tide of enthusiasm which carried the preacher upward and onward until, all at once, overwhelmed with the glory of his theme, he suddenly fell in the pulpit, exclaiming, as he fell, 'Glory!' Quickly recovering and rising to his knees, his voice was heard again in tones of agony, beseeching the people to fly to Christ, and while thus exhorting them he fell backward, clapping his hands, and shouting 'Glory! glory!' At this moment the venerable presiding elder, John M'Claskey, stepped forward and took up the exhortation, but he had not gone far before he also fell to the floor. Robert Sparks* next essayed to speak, but ere he had uttered a dozen sentences, he, too, fell.

"By this time the feelings of the vast congregation became uncontrollable, and burst forth in shouts of joy, mingled with cries for help, penitent sinners crying

* Robert Sparks was admitted on trial in 1785. He was irreproachable in character, and especially successful in originating and promoting revivals. He was not considered an eloquent or popular preacher. His travels as an itinerant were extensive. In one of his last public exercises he declared that he was looking for death every day, but was happy in God. He withdrew from the Church in 1829 and united with the Methodist Protestant Church. He died in Maryland, August, 1831.

aloud for the pardon of their sins and the people of God rejoicing and pointing them to Christ.

"Finding that none of the preachers could keep their feet in the pulpit, Lawrence M'Combs * leaped from the stand, and clasping a dog-wood sapling that stood near one of the mourner's benches to keep himself from falling, continued, with great power, the exhortation to the people to repent, and invited the mourners to come forward to the seats of prayer. Immediately there was a rush for the mourner's benches, which were speedily filled, and from that moment to the close of the meeting there was nothing done but to thrust in the sickle and gather the harvest; and an abundant one it was, for over five hundred people were converted to Christ." †

In the same year that these marvelous scenes occurred in Maryland—1809—and probably in the same month, there was an extraordinary manifestation under the preaching of Samuel Coate, at a camp-meeting in Bowers's woods, in the neighborhood of Salem, New Jersey. Mr. Coate was an exceptional orator, and was at the time stationed in Montreal. A Canadian authority says of Coate that "he was unboundedly popular and very useful. He was evidently a very extraordinary person for such a day and country. He swept like a meteor over the land and spell-bound the astonished gaze of the wondering new settlers. Nor was it astonishment alone he excited. He was the Heaven anointed and successful instrument of the salvation of hundreds. His success in the early part of his career was truly Whitefieldian."

The preaching of Mr. Coate, and the effect it produced at the camp-meeting in Bowers's woods, New Jersey, in

* Lawrence M'Combs was admitted on trial in 1792, and died June 11, 1836. Of commanding presence, excellent voice, and chastened imagination, he was a remarkable preacher, and exercised extraordinary power over multitudes at great camp-meetings.

† "The Life of Nicholas Snethen," in manuscript.

1809, is thus described by a competent observer:* "The Rev. Samuel Coate, among many other preachers, was there. He was the greatest preacher I ever saw or heard. One sermon he preached I shall never forget. It was on the resurrection and the judgment, the appearance of the white throne, etc. He sounded the trumpet and the trembling earth gave forth its unnumbered millions, while the ocean rolled its inmates to the shore. Death and hell gave up their victims, all taking their course toward and standing before the great white throne; all trembling to hear the fiat of God, the terrible Judge. The grandeur, the sublimity, the eloquence of this description can never be forgotten. All eyes were fastened upon him. Streaming tears attested the depth of feeling. He then threw open the portals of the mansions of bliss and crowned the happy righteous with glory, gave them palms of victory, and harps of heavenly melody, with which they praised the Lord for redeeming love. Then, moving to the front of the stand, the preacher began to drop the wicked into hell, and at last, with a mighty effort, plunged the whole of the condemned, death, hell, and all, into the abyss of eternal woe! Such an effect I never saw nor heard before nor since; such screams and cries for mercy; such praying and shouting all over the vast assemblage of the camp-ground from all classes, for all were affected. Many of the Society of Friends were there, and many of the most wealthy and respectable inhabitants of the surrounding country. General Shinn and Samuel Dorr, Esq., declared they had heard that day the greatest display of sublime eloquence attended with Divine power they ever heard. Charles Jones, a Quaker, became soundly converted, sprang upon a stump, and preached to the people. He told them he had been greatly deceived in thinking he had religion; but he never

* Judge James Newell, an eminent local preacher of Salem County, New Jersey, it is believed was the writer of this graphic account. It is found in Raybold's "Methodism in West Jersey."

had it until then. Himself and all his family became Methodists. The most respectable persons were down on the ground rolling among the leaves or prostrate among the seats, and a general surrender to the Lord seemed to prevail throughout the encampment. An old Friend I stood near during the sermon wept abundantly. At the close he turned to me and said, 'Thee has some great speakers in thy society. I never heard the like before.'

"This was a great day for Methodism. It took a position in Salem County and adjoining counties it never occupied before; a place not merely among the poor and illiterate, but the educated and influential. How many were added to the Church I cannot say, but numbers were converted on that ground. However, the sermon of brother Coate came near proving fatal to me. I had been trying to preach for some time, but after hearing that sermon I was brought to the conclusion that I had been deceived, that I could not preach, and so would never try again; for if such a preacher could not convert the world, it was no use for me to try."*

Previous to this great effort of Mr. Coate he had visited England. In a letter to the Rev. Joseph Benson, of London, dated Montreal, October 23, 1809, he speaks of the results of this sermon preached a few weeks previously. Coate says: "I have lately been in the United States and attended some very great camp-meetings; one in the State of Delaware, on the ground belonging to the old governor, Mr. Bassett; another, near Salem, New Jersey; a third, in the upper part of New Jersey, near Trenton; and a

* I clearly remember hearing a description of this wonderful sermon of Coate from Mr. John Dailey, of Pittsgrove, New Jersey, who heard it. Mr. Dailey was a brother of the late Rev. David Dailey, of the Philadelphia Conference, and father of the late Rev. Jacob P. Dailey, of the Newark Conference. He had heard some of the greatest camp-meeting orators of America, but I was impressed by his statements (though young at the time) that he ranked the sermon of Coate at Bowers's woods camp-meeting, in 1809, with the very greatest displays of sacred eloquence he had ever heard.

fourth at Croton River, in New York State, at all of which meetings the Divine presence was singularly manifested, and I think, by what I felt and saw myself, as well as from what I have since heard from others, my poor labors were crowned with as great success at some of those meetings as ever they were at any time of my life before. At Salem, it was said, forty or fifty were awakened under one sermon, the greater part of whom joined the society. This circumstance was a great comfort to me, for I have not been able to preach often. I have not had any disposition to be exalted, but rather to give all the glory to Him from whom every good and perfect gift is derived, and who can make use of the feeblest instrument to effect his purposes of grace toward his intelligent creatures." *

At the old Fountain Head camp-meeting, in Tennessee, Valentine Cook, the gift to the itinerancy of Cokesbury College, preached a remarkable sermon in 1818. Of that sermon a hearer says: "While reading his first hymn, 'Awake, Jerusalem, awake,' the assembly was much moved. The text was, 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' The

* Coate's letter to Benson, "Arminian Magazine," London. Samuel Coate was born in Burlington County, New Jersey. He was instrumental in the conversion of his brother, Michael Coate, who also became eminent in the Methodist ministry. Samuel was admitted to the itinerancy in 1794. The Rev. Dr. Laban Clark says of Samuel Coate that "he was a remarkably elegant, accomplished preacher, and combined in his manner a high degree of both force and beauty." He located, in impaired health, in 1810. He spent the last years of his life in England. It is said that there, in wandering about the country selling an engraved specimen of ornamental work which he made with the pen, he became also a wanderer in a sadder sense. He, however, returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Carroll, in his work on "Case and his Contemporaries," says: "The late eminently pious Rev. Dr. Harvard, for some years President of the Canada Conference, told us that he had the mournful pleasure of ministering to Coate in his last sickness, in England, where he died, and that that gifted and interesting man, when his heart was overwhelmed within him, fled to the 'Rock that was higher than' he. Upon that Rock he found firm footing in the 'swellings of Jordan.'"

character of the righteous was drawn at full length. The picture was complete and transcendently beautiful. Then came the dark shadings. The difficulties and dangers of the way; the trials and temptations, afflictions, and persecutions incident to the Christian life were held up in all their fearful aspects. The character of the sinner was now brought to view. There was something so fearfully startling in the delineations, that I felt myself insensibly drawing back from the scene as it was passing in review before me. Every eye was fixed and every ear was opened to catch the words of eternal truth as they rolled in thrilling torrents from his almost-inspired lips. No human tongue, untouched by flames fresh from the altar of God, could have spoken as he did. No language can adequately describe the scene that followed. The whole assemblage was in tears. Sinners were crying to God for mercy, while the saints of the Most High were shouting aloud for joy. Many souls were converted before the meeting closed. A great revival succeeded in all that section."

Thus, by means of its camp-meetings, Methodism found great access to the people. Its plain and generally small churches, school-houses, barns, and domiciles were inadequate to such large labors and achievements. In the woods, beneath the beautiful fretwork of leaves and the high, cerulean dome, all classes were attracted to hear the Gospel, and under its faithful presentation by anointed itinerants the Spirit was poured out from on high. The rushing pentecostal power swayed the vast crowds that thronged those sylvan temples, and swept them by thousands into the kingdom of grace. The first decade of the present century witnessed an increase of one hundred and nine thousand six hundred and sixty-six members in the Methodist Episcopal Church; and that immense increase was considerably due to the camp-meetings which were so efficient, under God, in promoting the great revival which marked the opening of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1804.

THE Rev. William Colbert was one of the pioneer itinerants of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was a friend and colleague of the Rev. Henry Boehm, and was a very efficient preacher. Mr. Boehm esteemed him highly. The author of this volume was impressed particularly with the affection which the venerable centenarian revealed for Colbert, in his conversations concerning the early days. Next to Asbury, the memory of none of the heroes with whom he marched in the evangelical campaigns of 1800, and subsequently, appeared to be cherished more tenderly by him than that of Mr. Colbert. Of him Mr. Boehm said to the author of these pages: "I joined society in 1797, when William Colbert and Dr. Chandler were on our circuit. Colbert had a particular aptitude for reaching the feelings of his hearers. His congregations were generally fine, for when a preacher made a stir among the people they rallied to hear him. He was a man of slight build; below the average stature, with a very expressive countenance, indicative of life and energy, with a strong voice, rather shrill and piercing, but commanding in its sound. Colbert was lively in preaching, but did not use much gesture, nor did he vociferate. He was fearless and powerful. He brought the truth home to his hearers with great effect. He was a full man, in every respect well qualified for his work. He was a man of ready speech, which was accompanied with a great deal of unction, and his success was great. He was a great revivalist. Brother Colbert and myself, in the year 1801, had about eight hundred conversions in Annamessex Circuit—a circuit which extended from the neighborhood of

Indian River, across the peninsula into Deal's Island, vulgarly called Devil's Island, in the Chesapeake. We had almost every soul converted on that island. There were, I believe, very few left."

Mr. Colbert was born in Montgomery County, Maryland, April 20, 1764. "My parents," he says, "were natives of England. My mother died in Baltimore. After her death I continued to live with my father, who, with myself, was destitute of religion until the year 1785, when it pleased the Lord to direct my wandering feet to hear the Methodists. In the year 1789 I was fully convinced that it was my duty to call sinners to repentance. The Lord removed one of his laborers out of his vineyard to his reward. I was recommended by Ignatius Pigman to Nelson Reed, presiding elder, who sent me to fill his place on Calvert Circuit, where I continued to labor until September, 1790." *

Colbert traveled extensively on circuits and as presiding elder in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York. In 1811 he located. He received a supernumerary relation in the Philadelphia Conference in 1825. "To the last he preached to the admiration of the people and to the edification and comfort of the followers of Christ." The day before he died he said: "It is a great thing to die. My only dependence is on a bleeding, all-sufficient Saviour." He departed June 16, 1833. His Journal preserved in manuscript is a record of diligent and devoted labor in the service of the Church.

Mr. Colbert was a member of the General Conference at Baltimore in 1804. The following is his Journal, so far as it relates to that body and its work:

"*Sunday*, 6, [May, 1804.] I heard Augustus Joslin preach an excellent sermon this morning in the meeting-house in Old Town from Isaiah i, 19. In the afternoon I heard Jesse Lee preach from Amos v, and first part of

* Obituary in the "Christian Advocate and Journal," August 9, 1833.

the 6th verse, in Light Street, and at night I heard Thomas Lyell, in Light Street, preach an excellent sermon from Matthew v, 44.

"*Monday*, 7. The General Conference commenced. The day spent in forming the rules of the house. We had several elegant speeches.

"*Tuesday*, 8. We finished the rules of our proceeding in the General Conference, and have begun the revision of our Discipline, chapter by chapter, section by section, and paragraph. At night George Pickering preached in Light Street from Matthew xii, 41, and after him Joseph Crawford gave us a very powerful and animating exhortation.

"*Wednesday*, 9. Sat in General Conference, and at night heard Lasley Matthews preach in Old Town from Hebrews ii, 3.

"*Thursday*, 10. The subject of debate was, Shall we have presiding elders? It was concluded we shall. In the evening heard Joseph Crawford preach from 1 Peter iv, 18, and his brother exhort after him.

"*Friday*, 11. We have had long and tedious debates on small matters trying to the patience.

"*Saturday*, 12. A motion was made to-day, by George Dougharty, which, to my satisfaction, passed into a law, that no preacher should be continued in a circuit for more than two years. I have had the pleasure of hearing Lorenzo Dow in the Hanover Market-house. A great number of preachers were to hear him, and a melting time it was.

"*Sunday*, 13. I heard Dr. Coke preach an excellent sermon this morning in Light Street from 2 Corinthians iii, 18. At five o'clock I heard Joseph Moore preach, in the Marsh Market-house, on 'The barren fig-tree.'

"*Tuesday*, 15. Repaired to Conference. Debates ran high. In the afternoon sat in Conference. The debate was warm on a resolution by Ezekiel Cooper, that the persons nominated by the trustees of the Chartered Fund,

in Philadelphia, should be considered ineligible to the office in consequence of their having withdrawn from the society, and it not being five years since they were received. The resolution was adopted, but by a small majority.

"*Tuesday*,* 16. I spent in General Conference. We have had disagreeable work in our Conference. What need of consideration!

"*Thursday*, 17. Spent in General Conference, and hearing William Vredenburg preach in Old Town from Luke xii, 32. Heard Ezekiel Cooper preach at night, in Light Street, from Mark xvi, 15, 16. I am possessed with awful fears that this Conference, as a body, will hoist the flood-gates of corruption in their attempts to destroy the rule prohibiting believers and unbelievers marrying together.

"*Friday*, 18. Spent in Conference. The day was spent in debating on whether the local deacon should be considered eligible to the office of elder after being a deacon six years, and recommended by four Quarterly Meeting Conferences for one year in the circuit in which he lives? When it was put to a vote there was a tie, forty-four and forty-four, which left it in the hands of the Bishops, who laid it over until the next General Conference. William Watters, who perhaps considered himself the most deeply interested in the business, went off this afternoon.

"*Saturday*, 19. The order of the day was called up in the General Conference to-day, which was the Book Concern. It was moved that it be removed from Philadelphia, and carried. It was then debated whether it should be moved to Baltimore or New York, and was carried in favor of New York by a small majority. In the afternoon, Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson were proposed for Agents. Cooper had thirty-six votes and Wilson thirty-

* For some reason Mr. Colbert drew his pen through Wednesday here, and wrote Tuesday again in its place.

four. So is the General Conference reduced by the impatience of the preachers from about one hundred and twelve to seventy. At night heard a North Carolina man preach in Old Town from Amos vii, 2: 'By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.'

"*Whitsunday*, 20. Heard Dr. Coke preach in Mr. Otterbein's church from Leviticus xi, 44. At three o'clock heard Bishop Asbury in Mr. Otterbein's church from Romans viii, 14; and at night Brother Burk at Old Town from Romans viii, 1.

"*Monday*, 21. Spent in Conference. Debates were warm. I dined at William Wood's with Brothers Ware and Black.* Returned to Conference. Debates still warm. Drank coffee with the Bishops at Sister Dickins's. Heard Ralph Williston preach at night in Light Street from John v, 40.

"*Tuesday*, 22. Spent in General Conference. Heard John West preach at Old Town at night from Isaiah xlv, 22.

"*Wednesday*, 23. In the afternoon ended our General Conference, which is the fourth General Conference I have been at, and I think the dullest of three if not of the four."

Although these notes of Mr. Colbert are very brief and terse, yet they serve to bring before the Church of to-day the men and events of earlier days. As records, slight though they be, of the chief councils of the Church in its formative years, by one of its early and heroic standard bearers, the extracts from his journals we have given concerning the early General Conferences have sufficient interest to entitle them to be recorded where they will be accessible to whosoever may search the history of those times.

* This undoubtedly was William Black, who came from Nova Scotia to the Christmas Conference.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CLOSE OF ASBURY'S SUPERINTENDENCY.

WHEN Bishop Whatcoat died, in the summer of 1806, Asbury was left alone to bear the burden of the Superintendency, for no longer did Dr. Coke share his labors. The Church had then grown to a membership of one hundred and thirty thousand, with four hundred and fifty preachers. It had spread over the settled portions of the republic. Its affairs had become more complex and its supervision involved increased travel, as well as more constant and varied exertion of mind. New questions of administration, and problems of ecclesiastical adjustment to new and various conditions, constantly pressed for solution. To none of these could the veteran Superintendent be indifferent. There was not a question, great or small, which related to the Church's need or welfare to which he did not give attention and thought. So alert was he that scarcely any thing in all the wide boundaries of the growing denomination escaped his vigilance, and from no interest which he could touch to advantage did he withhold his careful and helpful hand. The almost two years that the care of all the churches literally devolved upon him must have been crowded with responsibilities and labors sufficient to oppress, if not to crush, the strongest heart and brain.

Without faltering or complaining this master of ecclesiastical government, with more than three-score years upon his head, applied himself to the vast labors of his office. From Maine to Georgia, and from New Jersey to Ohio, with no comfortable rail-cars to facilitate his progress, he

personally supervised the great operations of the Church. It was a glad day for the weary hero when the General Conference gave him a strong colleague, one who had both capacity and readiness to mitigate the severity of his labors and to lighten his burdens.

Mr. M'Kendree had long been a loyal friend and lieutenant of the Bishop. He with great devotion and ability had administered the office of presiding elder in the West. He had passed over that new region where the Church advanced so rapidly with the increasing rush of immigration, planning wisely, and executing with skill, fidelity, and energy. To his effective leadership in that critical period in the West much of the prosperity of the Church was due. He had seen the solitary place made glad, and the wilderness blossom as the rose under the zealous and diligent culture of the itinerants whom he led to success.

It is true that, in an early stage of his ministry, M'Kendree, through the influence of his friend and presiding elder, Mr. O'Kelly, became disaffected for a time toward Asbury and the government of the Church. He left the General Conference of 1792 with O'Kelly, and subsequently notified the Bishop, in writing, of his declination of work. He, however, found a way of becoming better acquainted with the great leader of the new Church, and that acquaintance dispelled his prejudice and corrected his errors.

The Rev. Henry Smith, who labored with M'Kendree in the West, says: "He had been in the O'Kelly war against Bishop Asbury and Methodist Episcopacy, and had like to have been made a prisoner, but was rescued by the prudent conduct of Bishop Asbury. He asked the privilege of traveling with the Bishop, as a kind of condition to continue in the work. In 1801 he said to me: 'The only reason I had for wishing to travel with the Bishop was that I might have an opportunity of knowing the man, and to find out whether he was the man James O'Kelly represented him to be. To my great astonish-

ment, I found him just the reverse of what he was represented, and I was fully satisfied.'"

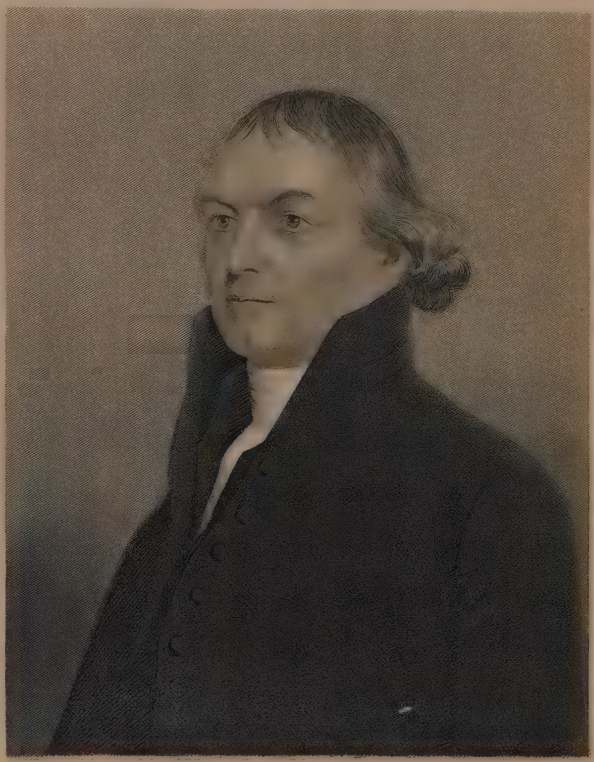
At the General Conference in Baltimore, in 1808, M'Kendree was called, by the vote of that body, to the Superintendency of the Church. The Sabbath before he was elected he preached in the presence of members of the General Conference. "We never can forget," says one of them, "the powerful effects of the sermon which he delivered on the Sabbath morning previous to his election, in the Light Street Church, when the whole congregation seemed to be overwhelmed with a sense of the Divine presence, and weeping, loud crying, and shouts of hosanna were seen and heard in every part of the house. 'That sermon,' said Bishop Asbury, who was present, 'will secure his election.'" * His promotion followed on the 12th of May.

Mr. Zachary Myles, of Baltimore, wrote, August 20, 1808, of M'Kendree: "Our new Bishop is a man of a pleasing person, a sweet countenance, and a very Christian spirit. He reminds us of that dear saint, Richard Whatcoat." In a sermon, preached in Baltimore, after M'Kendree's election, Bishop Asbury said: "Now, after forty years, the Lord has raised you up a Superintendent, a Bishop from among yourselves, a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost."†

Asbury expressed his gratification that the burden of the Superintendency was now borne by two pairs of shoulders. He and M'Kendree traveled and presided in Conference together, and labored as true yoke-fellows in Jesus. Bishop Asbury's confidence in and affection for his colleague breathes in his Journal. In manners M'Kendree was a courteous, it might perhaps be said a courtly, gentleman. He had enjoyed in Virginia "highly cultivated society." He was about six feet in stature, of fine proportions, and remarkably prepossessing. He was in profound sympathy with the distinctive methods of the Church, and

* Editorial in the "Christian Advocate and Journal," April 3, 1836.

† "Arminian Magazine," 1808, pp. 574, 575.



his whole being was consecrated to its service in Christ. He had long known and loved Bishop Asbury, and now stood by his side as his colleague in administering the Superintendency, with an adaptation by rare native gifts and special training in the field to the varied and difficult requirements of the office such as few if any others possessed, and which, together with his unfaltering devotion to the work, have placed him among the greatest of the Bishops of the American Methodist Church.

For almost eight years the two Bishops labored harmoniously and traveled much together. Mr. Boehm frequently rode in company with both, and for five years he was constantly by the side of Asbury.

Henry Boehm was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, June 8, 1775, and died on Staten Island, New York, December 28, 1875. He was the son of the Rev. Martin Boehm, a friend of Asbury, and a Bishop of the United Brethren. Henry was converted in 1797, was licensed by Thomas Ware in 1799, and began to travel about the beginning of 1800. He was a fine example of our early ministry, and personally knew many of the fathers. Of manly stature, sound intellect, uniform character, good utterance, a true gentleman, and a blameless Christian, he nobly represented to the present generation the heroic age of Methodism. The anniversary of his hundredth birthday was celebrated by a throng of the clergy and members of the denomination he had served so long and so well, in Trinity Church, Jersey City. A review of his long career, written from his lips by the author of this volume, was read by the amanuensis by his directon, and addresses were made by distinguished ministers, among whom were the Rev. Drs. J. S. Porter, Buttz, Foss, Todd, Bartine. A poem was read by the Rev. Dr. George Lansing Taylor. A few weeks previously he delivered a brief sermon before the Newark Conference in the same church. He preached in John Street, New York, after he passed

his centennial. He received in his last days the care of his daughter, Mrs. S. C. Emley. He was a sound, faithful, and useful preacher.

At length the bereaved M'Kendree was called upon, in the same city where he had been elected as the associate of Asbury, to preside at the obsequies of the great departed.

We have seen that Bishop Asbury died in Virginia on the last day of March, 1816. A month later and he would have witnessed another General Conference. This, however, was not to be. He had been graciously preserved through nearly the whole quadrennium, and his great task fell from his hand just as the General Conference was about to convene, and when it could provide suitable episcopal re-enforcements.

Though the death of Bishop Asbury occurred a month before the General Conference assembled, his remains were brought to Baltimore during its session for final interment. Upon the occasion of his burial in the same city where, thirty one years before, he had been placed in the Superintendency of the newly organized Church, a large concourse of people gathered, with the members of the General Conference. Bishop M'Kendree walked at the head of the great procession. The members of the General Conference walked next to the Bishop, then the members of the Church and citizens in vast numbers. Amidst the grief of the Church, as displayed in that representative assemblage, M'Kendree pronounced the funeral oration, and the remains of Asbury were laid in the place of their final repose.

Thus descended to the tomb, full of years and of the imperishable honors of spiritual conquest, the greatest man in Christian labor and achievement who has ever shed the benediction of his life upon the continent of America. He is enrolled evermore with the martyrs and heroes of God. "He being dead yet speaketh."

APPENDIX.

A.

METHODISM IN THE CITIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE conditions in cities are not the same as in rural regions. The methods of Methodism are somewhat unlike those of other denominations. It is, therefore, a question not simply of curiosity, but of real importance, whether a Church of singular features of organization and administration, and which has shown unquestionable adaptation to the conditions of the agricultural portions of the country, is also well adapted to cities. That this question may be determined, an appeal to facts is necessary. The table which in the following pages is presented to the Church exhibts these facts in so far as they relate to the numerical status in the American cities of the chief division of the Methodist family. Towns having a population of ten thousand and upward, according to the tenth United States census, we accept as *cities* in this enumeration. Places of less population are often incorporated as cities, but for the purposes of this inquiry we have chosen to exclude them. The number of full members and of probationers in the Methodist Episcopal Church in each of these cities, according to the latest General Minutes, is here given.

The question as to *how far* Methodism is successful in cities can only be satisfactorily determined by a comparison with those Churches whose success in urban communities is not questioned. If it falls seriously behind them, the fact would indicate that the peculiar system of Methodism is not so well suited to the cities as to the country. If it does not fall behind them, the contrary conclusion follows, in a good degree at least. The denominations which, for the purpose of this comparison, have been selected are the Baptist, Congregational, Protestant Episcopal, and Presbyterian. The latest and best accessible statistical returns of these Churches * have been consulted, and

* Considerable difficulty has been overcome in obtaining approximately correct reports from the Baptist denomination. The statistics of the Baptists are not issued in perfected official form, but in minutes of Associations and by States.

the number of communicants of each in the cities designated is given in the table of comparisons. How each of the denominations named stands as related to the Methodists numerically, the reader will see by scanning the columns which give the number of members of each Church in each city. How the Methodists stand as related to these denominations in their combined membership in each of the cities will be seen by consulting the columns which contain the percentages.

Concerning the following tabular exhibit of the Methodist Episcopal Church membership, and the membership of the four other most numerous evangelical denominations of the country, extended comments are unnecessary. It will be observed that so far from Methodism having proved a failure in urban fields, it is relatively strong in numbers in nearly all of the cities of the United States. Furthermore, it will be noticed that it is stronger, numerically, in a number of the cities than either of the other Churches, and that in a few of them its communicants exceed those of the other four denominations combined. In the column which gives the percentage which the four denominations combined exceed the Methodist, the figures in the case of the cities in which they are less require to be transposed in the mind of the reader by substituting less for more. This is indicated, however, in each instance where it occurs by an asterisk.

One other fact is to be noted, namely, that in the territory where the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is numerous in the cities, the Methodist Episcopal Church is not, as a rule, very numerous. The same fact holds respecting the Presbyterian Church, except that in most of the Southern cities the Presbyterian Church of the North does not exist. Had the Southern Methodist Church been included in this exhibit, the result would have appeared much more favorable to Methodism. In the Baptist, Congregational, and Episcopal bodies such sectional division does not exist.

The table, as now presented, shows with sufficient definiteness the work which the Methodist Episcopal Church has accomplished in the single century of its existence in the cities of the United States.

Some of the Association reports for the year 1884 may have been issued before these tables were completed, but such instances are too few to materially affect the exhibit. The number of the Baptists in several of the cities is also rendered somewhat uncertain in consequence of the impossibility of securing *accurate* numbers of colored Baptists. Careful inquiry and correspondence have failed to secure, in some cases, satisfactory figures. The Congregational, Episcopal, and Presbyterian numbers are taken from their latest published denominational statistics.

In that century it has collected congregations, organized churches, built houses of worship, parsonages, and in some instances schools, in the cities of the republic; and, with the foundations wisely and securely laid, it enters upon the second century of its ecclesiastical life and warfare with the prestige of success and the promise of victory.

A TABLE OF COMPARISONS.

IN the following table will be found, in order, the name of every city in the United States having a population of ten thousand and upward; the population of every such city, as given by the census of 1880; the number of Baptist, Congregational, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian members in the city; the total membership of these four denominations; the number of full members of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the number of probationers of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the *total* membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, inclusive of probationers; the per cent. which the membership of the four denominations combined is greater (occasionally less) than the full membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the per cent. which the membership of the four denominations is greater (occasionally less) than the *total* membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the per cent. which the full membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church is of the entire full membership of the five denominations; and the per cent. which the *total* membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church is of the entire membership of the five denominations.

STATE.	CITY.	Population in 1880.	Number of Baptist Communicants.	Number of Congregational Communicants.	Number of Episcopalians.	Number of Presbyterians.	Total No. of Bap., Cong., Epis., and Presbyterians.	Number of Full Members of the M. E. Church.	Number of Probationers M. E. Church.	Total No. of Members of M. E. Church.	Per cent. of B., C., E., and P. more than M. E. Full Members.	Per cent. of B., C., E., and P. more than M. E. Total.	Per cent. of whole No. of M. E. Church Full Members.	Per cent. of whole No. of M. E. Total.
Alabama	Mobile	29,132	561	43	1,294	....	1,898	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Montgomery	16,713	473	76	502	....	1,051	87	12	99	84.8	82.8	7.6	8.6
Arkansas	Little Rock	13,138	—b	79	312	....	391	363	28	391	3.8	....	48.1	50.0
California	Los Angeles	11,183	150a	173	100	269	692	644	85	729	3.2	2.6	48.2	51.3
	Oakland	34,555	542	1,020	651	1,029	3,242	666	33	699	66.0	64.6	17.0	17.7
	Sacramento	21,420	475a	257	135	327	1,194	284	11	295	61.6	60.4	19.2	19.8
	San Francisco	233,959	699	1,725	1,770	3,464	7,658	1,591	182	1,773	65.6	62.4	17.2	18.8
	San José	12,567	250	120	270	310	950	634	42	676	20.0	16.8	40.0	41.6
	Stockton	10,282	320a	85	150	170	725	323	9	332	38.4	37.2	30.8	31.4
Colorado	Denver	35,629	749	533	691	894	2,867	976	50	1,026	49.2	37.4	25.4	26.3
	Leadville	14,820	87	56	150	165	458	339	73	412	15.0	5.4	42.5	47.3
Connecticut	Bridgeport	27,643	528	1,450	1,190	245	3,413	1,067	52	1,119	52.4	50.6	23.8	24.7
	Danbury	11,666	479	644	400	....	1,523	700	90	790	37.0	31.8	31.5	34.1
	Derby	11,650	....	162	....	....	162	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Hartford	42,015	1,878	3,225	1,457	258	6,818	846	174	1,020	78.0	74.0	11.0	13.0
	Meriden	15,540	868	907	510	....	2,285	810	115	925	47.6	42.4	26.2	28.8
	New Britain	11,800	506	1,255	183	....	1,944	318	15	333	72.0	70.8	14.0	14.6
	New Haven	62,882	1,525	5,451	2,296	....	9,272	2,277	130	2,407	60.6	58.8	19.7	20.6
	New London	10,537	803	642	380	....	1,825	286	15	301	73.0	71.6	13.5	14.2
	Norwalk	13,956	234	946	300	....	1,480	478	21	499	51.2	49.6	24.4	25.2
	Norwich	15,112	902	1,687	606	....	3,195	838	91	929	58.4	55.0	20.8	22.5
	Stamford	11,297	280	375	814	330	1,799	500	72	572	56.5	51.8	21.7	24.1
	Waterbury	17,806	365	956	1,040	....	2,361	657	67	724	56.6	53.0	21.7	23.5
Delaware	Wilmington	42,478	1,570	....	837	1,278	3,685	3,427	488	3,915	3.6	*8.0	48 2	51.5
District Columbia	Georgetown	12,578	89	....	824	....	913	256	9	265	56.2	55.0	21.9	22.5
	Washington	147,293	2,065	952	4,419	3,306	10,742	6,119	467	6,586	27.4	24.0	36.3	38.0
Georgia	Atlanta	37,409	199a	779	39	....	1,017	667	71	738	22.0	16.0	39.0	42.0
	Augusta	21,891	1,023	....	657	11	1,691	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Columbus	10,123	570a	....	274	....	844	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Macon	12,749	750	88	532	100	1,470	41	14	55	94.6	92.8	3.7	3.6
	Savannah	30,709	526	120	1,112	....	1,758	55	21	76	94.0	92.0	3.0	4.0
Illinois	Aurora	11,873	508	448	89	136	1,181	533	46	579	37.8	34.0	31.1	33.0
	Belleville	10,683	173	....	67	80	320	380	8	388	8.6	9.6	54.3	54.8
	Bloomington	17,180	651	....	155	742	1,548	1,339	54	1,393	7.4	5.2	46.3	47.4
	Chicago	503,185	5,323	5,089	4,327	7,085	21,824	6,829	764	7,593	52.4	48.4	23.8	25.8
	Galesburg	11,437	411	780	95	249	1,535	674	25	699	39.0	37.8	30.5	31.2

	Jacksonville	10,927	208	204	136	1,247	1,885	912	68	980	35.6	31.6	32.2	34.2
	Joliet	11,657	248	....	133	506	887	474	38	507	30.4	27.2	34.8	36.4
	Peoria	29,259	400	373	215	1,043	2,031	710	110	820	48.2	42.6	25.9	28.7
	Quincy	27,268	628	275	395	322	1,620	865	43	908	30.4	28.2	34.8	35.9
	Rockford	13,129	525	828	150	613	2,016	1,271	88	1,359	25.0	21.8	37.5	39.1
	Rock Island	11,659	211	....	234	366	811	330	23	353	42.2	39.4	28.9	30.3
	Springfield	19,743	635	184	380	1,234	2,483	722	33	755	54.2	52.8	22.9	23.6
Indiana	Evansville	29,280	291	....	405	543	1,239	1,329	62	1,391	3.4	*5.6	51.7	52.8
	Fort Wayne	26,880	231	120	290	744	1,385	647	299	946	36.4	19.0	31.8	40.5
	Indianapolis	75,056	1,096	312	753	2,725	4,886	4,283	334	4,617	6.6	*2.8	46.7	48.6
	La Fayette	14,860	290	....	167	400	857	785	31	816	4.4	2.6	47.8	48.7
	Logansport	11,198	167	....	60	709	936	774	50	824	9.6	6.4	45.2	46.8
	New Albany	16,423	231	....	144	1,079	1,454	1,447	91	1,538	4.0	*2.8	49.8	51.4
	Richmond	12,742	126	....	178	420	724	726	63	789	....	*4.2	50.0	52.1
	South Bend	13,280	324	....	183	250	757	703	40	743	3.8	1.0	48.1	49.5
	Terre Haute	26,042	531	284	325	601	1,641	991	83	1,074	24.8	21.0	37.6	39.5
Iowa	Burlington	19,450	648	294	178	356	1,476	894	45	939	24.6	22.4	37.7	38.8
	Cedar Rapids	10,104	280	85	281	699	1,345	305	22	327	63.0	61.0	18.5	19.5
	Council Bluffs	18,063	175	153	150	311	789	203	5	208	59.2	58.2	20.4	20.9
	Davenport	24,831	409	368	287	396	1,460	469	10	479	51.6	50.6	24.2	24.7
	Des Moines	22,408	461	361	200	382	1,404	1,108	40	1,148	11.8	10.0	44.1	45.0
	Dubuque	22,254	168	329	93	729	1,319	338	25	363	59.2	56.8	20.4	21.6
	Keokuk	12,117	505	200	262	379	1,346	459	60	519	49.0	44.4	25.5	27.8
Kansas	Atchison	15,105	805	173	131	190	1,299	291	2	293	63.4	63.2	18.3	18.4
	Leavenworth	16,546	484	256	86	472	1,298	265	39	304	66.0	62.2	17.0	18.9
	Topeka	15,452	785	385	173	643	1,966	1,096	124	1,220	28.4	23.4	35.8	38.3
Kentucky	Covington	29,720	583	....	236	395	1,213	759	62	821	23.2	20.0	38.4	40.0
	Lexington	16,656	669	....	322	253	1,244	998	110	1,108	11.0	5.2	44.5	47.4
	Louisville	123,758	2,379	....	2,201	1,532	6,112	1,286	200	1,486	65.2	61.0	17.4	19.5
	Newport	20,433	227	84	298	150	759	392	73	465	32.0	24.0	34.0	38.0
Louisiana	New Orleans	216,090	450a	471	2,658	60	3,639	2,691	361	3,052	15.0	12.8	42.5	43.6
Maine	Bangor	16,856	499	990	207	....	1,696	432	37	469	59.4	56.6	20.3	21.7
	Biddeford	12,651	260	230	64	....	554	395	32	427	16.8	4.8	41.6	47.6
	Lewiston	19,083	454	379	146	....	979	418	49	467	39.8	35.4	30.1	32.3
	Portland	33,810	749	2,188	727	....	3,664	562	52	614	73.4	71.2	13.3	14.4
Maryland	Baltimore	332,313	3,287	162	8,852	3,723	16,024	17,426	1,493	18,919	4.2	*14.0	52.1	57.0
	Cumberland	10,693	66	....	150	255	471	634	30	664	14.6	17.0	57.3	58.5
Massachusetts	Attleborough	11,111	168	491	....	....	659	252	27	279	44.8	40.6	27.6	29.7
	Boston	362,839	9,568	8,740	5,949	948	25,205	5,987	618	6,605	61.6	58.4	19.2	20.8
	Brocton	13,608	215	575	32	....	822	428	71	499	31.6	24.4	34.2	37.8
	Cambridge	52,669	2,265	2,158	958	....	5,381	893	156	1,049	71.6	67.4	14.2	16.3
	Chelsea	21,782	811	1,151	194	....	2,156	727	51	778	49.6	47.0	25.2	26.5
	Chicopee	11,286	288	505	30	....	823	124	20	144	73.8	70.2	13.1	14.9

State.	City.	Population in 1880.	Number of Baptist Communicants.	Number of Congregational Communicants.	Number of Episcopalians.	Number of Presbyterians.	Total No. of Bap., Cong., Epis., and Presbyterians.	Number of Full Members of the M. E. Church.	Number of Probationers M. E. Church.	Total No. of Members of M. E. Church.	Per cent. of B., C., E., and P. more than M. E. Full Members.	Per cent. of B., C., E., and P. more than M. E. Total.	Per cent. of whole No. of M. E. Church Full Members.	Per cent. of whole No. of M. E. Total.
Massachusetts	Fall River	48,961	915	683	352	....	1,950	1,182	133	1,315	24.6	19.4	37.7	40.3
	Fitchburg	12,429	414	709	200	....	1,323	261	10	271	67.0	66.0	16.5	17.0
	Gloucester	19,329	459	382	60	....	901	408	78	486	37.8	30.0	31.1	35.0
	Haverhill	18,472	824	797	285	....	1,906	569	58	627	54.0	50.6	23.0	24.7
	Holyoke	21,915	613	320	186	....	1,119	284	23	307	59.6	57.0	20.2	21.5
	Lawrence	39,151	918	1,173	590	205	2,886	907	140	1,047	52.2	46.8	23.9	26.6
	Lowell	59,475	1,616	2,397	850	175	5,068	1,387	174	1,561	57.0	53.0	21.5	23.5
	Lynn	38,274	1,074	990	400	....	2,464	1,635	203	1,838	20.4	14.6	39.8	42.7
	Malden	12,017	572	347	193	....	1,112	389	32	421	48.2	45.2	25.9	27.4
	Marlborough	10,127	77	260	....	....	337	121	9	130	51.4	48.8	24.3	25.6
	New Bedford	26,845	636	720	305	....	1,691	964	64	1,028	26.6	23.6	36.7	38.2
	Newburyport	13,538	224	876	275	300	1,675	202	56	258	78.6	73.4	10.7	13.3
	Newton	16,995	589	1,643	445	....	2,667	85	5	90	94.0	93.6	3.0	3.2
	North Adams	10,191	915	566	141	....	1,622	603	1	604	45.8	45.8	27.1	27.1
	Northampton	12,172	267	1,090	100	....	1,457	149	10	159	81.4	80.4	9.3	9.8
	Pittsfield	13,364	489	970	200	....	1,459	667	24	691	43.6	41.2	28.7	29.4
	Quincy	10,570	190	202	200	....	592	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Salem	27,563	957	912	430	....	2,299	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Somerville	24,933	878	974	286	....	2,138	726	81	807	49.4	45.2	25.3	27.4
	Springfield	33,340	1,278	2,386	530	....	4,194	1,317	70	1,387	52.4	50.4	23.8	24.8
	Taunton	21,213	375	839	436	....	1,650	721	89	810	39.2	34.2	30.4	32.9
	Waltham	11,712	321	327	217	....	845	379	49	423	39.0	34.6	30.5	32.7
	Weymouth	10,570	167	956	53	....	1,176	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Woburn	10,931	312	732	84	....	1,128	241	44	285	64.8	59.6	17.6	20.2
	Worcester	58,291	1,347	2,875	513	....	4,735	1,668	137	1,805	48.0	44.8	26.0	27.6
Michigan	Bay City	20,693	412	138	210	287	1,047	519	68	587	33.8	28.2	33.1	35.9
	Detroit	116,340	1,823	603	3,350	3,383	9,159	2,182	192	2,374	61.6	58.8	19.2	20.6
	East Saginaw	19,016	234	377	216	131	956	420	74	494	39.2	32.0	30.4	34.0
	Grand Rapids	32,016	657	787	656	636	2,736	1,237	132	1,369	37.8	33.4	31.1	33.3
	Jackson	16,105	456	455	313	60	1,284	518	79	597	42.6	36.6	28.7	31.7
	Muskegon	11,262	....	214	147	....	361	293	50	343	10.4	2.6	44.8	48.7
	Saginaw	10,525	184	....	255	219	658	207	16	223	52.2	49.4	23.9	25.3
Minnesota	Minneapolis	46,887	1,362	1,338	939	1,436	5,075	2,068	162	2,230	42.2	39.0	28.9	30.5
	Saint Paul	41,473	744	518	1,117	1,291	3,670	1,325	78	1,403	47.0	44.8	26.5	27.6
	Winona	10,208	112	254	177	181	724	333	22	355	37.0	34.2	31.5	32.9
Mississippi	Vicksburg	11,814	140a	....	305	...	445	150	25	175	49.6	43.6	25.2	28.2

Missouri	Hannibal	11,074	184	107	150	303	744	323	97	420	59.4	28.0	30.3	36.0
	Kansas City	55,785	903	277	612	886	2,678	974	148	1,122	46.8	41.0	26.6	29.5
	Saint Joseph	32,431	395	91	387	210	1,083	361	69	430	50.0	43.2	25.0	28.4
	Saint Louis	350,518	1,748	1,725	2,348	2,998	8,819	2,516	224	2,740	55.6	52.6	22.2	23.7
Nebraska	Lincoln	13,003	234	229	104	291	858	453	39	482	30.8	27.2	34.6	36.4
	Omaha	30,518	355	378	544	572	1,849	523	35	558	56.0	53.8	22.0	23.1
Nevada	Virginia City	10,917	20a	....	63	44	127	29	1	30	62.8	61.8	18.6	19.1
New Hampshire	Concord	13,843	583	884	358	...	1,825	406	46	452	65.4	60.4	17.3	19.8
	Dover	11,687	160	481	137	....	778	311	12	323	43.0	41.4	28.5	29.3
	Manchester	32,630	826	1,148	266	79	2,319	665	73	738	55.4	51.8	22.3	24.1
	Nashua	13,397	467	981	170	....	1,618	487	33	520	53.8	51.4	23.1	24.3
New Jersey	Camden	41,659	1,947	....	606	742	3,295	3,421	433	3,854	1.8	*7.8	50.9	53.9
	Elizabeth	28,229	559	106	1,341	2,168	4,174	834	49	883	66.8	65.2	16.6	17.4
	Hoboken	30,999	387	....	757	519	1,663	451	15	466	57.4	56.4	21.3	21.8
	Jersey City	120,722	1,680	393	1,785	932	4,790	2,877	367	3,244	25.0	19.2	37.5	40.4
	Newark	136,508	3,782	479	2,240	5,326	11,827	5,139	374	5,573	39.4	36.4	30.3	31.8
	New Brunswick	17,166	943	....	398	622	1,963	819	37	856	41.2	39.4	29.4	30.3
	Orange	13,207	1,007	507	703	2,422	4,639	422	31	453	83.4	82.4	8.3	8.8
	Paterson	51,031	1,190	154	625	1,398	3,367	1,981	187	2,168	26.0	21.8	37.0	39.1
	Trenton	29,910	1,682	....	735	1,636	4,053	2,451	124	2,575	24.6	22.4	37.7	38.8
New York	Albany	90,758	2,386	....	2,140	3,103	7,629	1,588	68	1,656	65.6	64.4	17.2	17.8
	Auburn	21,924	634	....	613	1,563	2,810	1,028	63	1,091	46.6	44.2	26.7	27.9
	Binghamton	17,317	746	524	617	1,092	2,979	1,308	146	1,454	39.0	34.4	30.5	32.8
	Brooklyn	566,663	11,189	8,492	12,231	12,776	44,688	13,633	1,269	14,902	53.4	50.0	23.3	25.0
	Buffalo	155,134	1,970	231	2,469	2,992	7,662	2,094	223	2,317	57.2	53.6	21.4	23.2
	Cohoes	19,416	355	....	500	430	1,285	392	29	421	53.4	50.8	23.3	24.6
	Elmira	20,541	628	508	432	919	2,487	1,089	37	1,126	39.2	37.8	30.4	31.1
	Kingston	18,344	165	....	258	119	542	1,105	74	1,179	35.2	*36.8	67.1	68.4
	Lockport	13,522	482	462	621	901	2,466	300	10	310	78.4	77.8	10.8	11.1
	Long Island City	17,129	203	....	60	....	263	235	20	255	5.6	1.6	47.2	49.2
	New Brighton	12,679	....	....	250	....	250	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Newburg	18,049	379	....	553	1,330	2,262	1,520	208	1,728	19.6	13.4	40.2	43.3
	New York	1,206,299	13,551	2,231	26,695	19,418	61,895	12,962	1,504	13,466	65.4	64.8	17.3	17.6
	Ogdensburg	10,341	220	51	400	495	1,166	320	26	346	57.0	54.4	21.5	22.8
	Oswego	21,116	558	299	536	606	1,999	798	69	867	43.0	39.6	28.5	30.2
	Poughkeepsie	20,207	417	261	1,014	440	2,132	1,516	57	1,573	16.8	15.2	41.6	42.4
	Rochester	89,369	2,002	....	2,309	4,079	8,390	1,985	110	2,095	61.8	60.0	19.1	20.0
	Rome	12,194	284	50	496	432	1,262	793	82	875	22.8	18.2	38.6	40.9
	Schenectady	13,655	377	297	360	961	1,995	964	116	1,080	35.0	29.8	32.5	35.1
	Syracuse	51,792	895	483	1,289	1,659	4,326	1,804	106	1,910	41.2	38.8	29.4	30.6
	Troy	56,747	1,775	....	1,826	2,996	6,597	2,267	341	2,608	49.0	43.4	25.5	28.3
	Utica	33,914	737	307	1,489	1,567	4,100	779	104	883	68.2	64.6	15.9	17.7
	Watertown	10,697	215	....	651	680	1,546	342	2	344	63.8	63.6	18.1	18.2

STATE.	CITY.	Population in 1880.	Number of Baptist Communicants.	Number of Congregational Communicants.	Number of Episcopalians.	Number of Presbyterians.	Total No. of Bap., Cong., Epis., and Presbyterians.	Number of Full Members of the M. E. Church.	Number of Probationers M. E. Church.	Total No. of Members of M. E. Church.	Per cent. of B., C., E., and P. more than M. E. Full Members.	Per cent. of B., C., E., and P. more than M. E. Total.	Per cent. of whole No. of M. E. Church Full Members.	Per cent. of whole No. of M. E. Total.
New York	Yonkers	18,892	590	....	713	964	2,267	622	84	706	57.0	52.6	21.5	23.7
North Carolina	Wilmington	17,350	510a	37	690	102	1,339	43	9	52	93.8	92.6	3.1	3.7
Ohio	Akron	16,512	145	769	234	....	1,148	913	14	927	11.4	10.8	44.3	44.6
	Canton	12,258	321	....	86	310	717	658	19	677	4.4	3.0	47.8	48.5
	Chillicothe	10,938	145	....	105	502	752	673	16	689	5.6	4.4	47.2	47.8
	Cincinnati	255,139	2,097	931	1,836	4,209	9,073	4,953	371	5,324	29.4	26.2	35.3	36.9
	Cleveland	160,146	2,042	2,140	2,518	3,943	10,643	2,608	176	2,779	60.8	58.6	19.6	20.7
	Columbus	51,647	1,239	818	555	1,046	3,658	3,013	104	3,117	9.8	8.0	45.1	46.0
	Dayton	38,678	967	....	442	1,251	2,660	1,706	63	1,769	12.0	20.2	39.0	39.9
	Hamilton	12,122	196	....	....	320	516	339	3	342	20.8	20.4	39.6	39.8
	Portsmouth	11,321	235	....	368	880	1,483	921	32	953	23.4	21.8	38.3	39.1
	Sandusky	15,838	154	307	568	176	1,205	220	6	226	69.2	68.6	15.4	15.7
	Springfield	20,730	644	221	187	968	2,020	1,699	135	1,834	8.8	4.8	45.6	47.6
	Steubenville	12,093	61	106	210	798	1,175	656	44	700	28.4	25.4	35.8	37.3
	Toledo	50,137	800	430	578	1,245	3,053	1,358	88	1,446	38.6	35.8	30.7	32.1
	Youngstown	15,435	491	274	215	588	1,568	611	16	627	44.0	43.0	28.0	28.5
	Zanesville	18,113	806	....	248	860	1,914	1,234	63	1,297	21.6	19.4	39.2	40.3
Oregon	Portland	17,577	170a	313	252	436	1,171	507	31	538	39.6	37.2	30.2	31.4
Pennsylvania	Allegheny	78,682	774	263	316	2,743	4,096	2,154	127	2,281	31.2	28.6	34.4	35.7
	Allentown	18,063	121	....	42	134	297	179	34	213	24.8	16.6	37.6	41.7
	Altoona	19,710	322	....	173	1,120	1,615	1,481	98	1,579	4.4	1.2	47.8	49.4
	Chester	14,997	283	....	457	794	1,534	1,426	102	1,528	3.8	0.2	48.1	49.9
	Easton	11,924	148	....	85	661	894	298	19	317	50.0	47.8	25.0	26.1
	Erie	27,737	269	....	511	1,090	1,870	619	13	632	50.4	49.6	24.8	25.2
	Harrisburg	30,762	243	....	212	1,162	1,617	1,475	107	1,582	4.6	1.2	47.7	49.4
	Lancaster	25,769	55	....	615	511	1,181	682	87	769	26.6	21.2	36.7	39.4
	Norristown	13,063	574	....	300	783	1,657	525	33	558	52.0	49.6	24.0	25.2
	Philadelphia	847,170	14,885	283	28,508	24,671	68,347	25,208	2,806	28,014	43.2	38.8	28.4	30.6
	Pittsburg	156,389	1,626	317	2,015	4,365	8,323	5,274	247	5,521	22.6	20.4	38.7	39.8
	Pottsville	13,253	131	21	400	380	932	451	31	482	34.8	31.8	32.6	34.1
	Reading	43,278	417	....	320	510	1,247	991	31	1,022	11.6	10.0	44.2	45.0
	Scranton	45,850	501	....	352	1,362	2,215	1,473	174	1,647	20.0	14.8	40.0	42.6
	Shenandoah	10,147	34	....	....	101	135	252	9	261	30.2	31.8	65.1	65.9
	Wilkesbarre	23,339	28	....	335	646	1,009	1,156	61	1,217	7.0	9.4	53.5	54.7
	Williamsport	18,934	612	....	454	853	1,919	1,651	316	1,967	7.6	*1.2	46.2	50.6
	York	13,940	76	....	228	475	779	670	72	742	7.6	2.6	46.2	48.7

Rhode Island	Lincoln	13,765	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Newport	15,693	853	474	955	....	2,282	464	24	488	66.4	64.8	16.8	17.6
	Pawtucket	19,030	560	444	576	....	1,580	419	31	450	58.2	55.8	20.9	22.1
	Providence	104,857	4,114	2,803	2,837	204	9,958	2,251	484	2,735	63.2	58.6	18.4	20.7
	Warwick	12,164	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Woonsocket	16,050	220	110	218	....	548	164	27	191	54.0	48.4	23.0	25.8
South Carolina	Charleston	49,984	—b	232	2,129	1,301	3,662	2,809	372	3,181	13.7	7.2	43.4	46.4
	Columbia	10,036	—b	....	356	120	476	178	16	194	45.6	42.2	27.2	28.9
Tennessee	Chattanooga	12,892	—b	118	277	135	530	689	27	716	13.0	*14.8	56.5	57.4
	Memphis	33,592	830	121	786	....	1,737	191	22	213	80.2	78.2	9.9	10.9
	Nashville	43,350	—b	243	463	....	706	708	85	793	....	*5.6	50.0	52.8
Texas	Austin	11,013	270	....	232	281	783	767	92	859	1.2	4.6	49.4	52.3
	Dallas	10,358	500	70	268	49	887	192	40	232	64.4	58.6	17.8	20.7
	Galveston	22,248	200	....	580	87	867	631	30	661	15.8	13.6	42.1	43.2
	Houston	16,513	300	....	359	....	659	538	109	647	10.2	1.0	44.9	49.5
	San Antonio	20,550	175	....	342	37	554	224	9	233	42.6	40.8	28.7	29.6
Utah	Salt Lake	20,768	18	160	275	104	557	99	13	112	69.8	66.6	15.1	16.7
Vermont	Burlington	11,365	360	509	426	....	1,295	388	32	420	54.0	51.0	23.0	24.5
	Rutland	12,149	388	870	274	....	1,532	345	43	388	63.2	59.6	18.4	20.2
Virginia	Alexandria	13,659	398	....	671	50	1,119	573	35	608	32.4	29.6	33.8	35.2
	Lynchburg	15,959	750	....	537	....	1,287	525	161	686	42.2	30.6	28.9	34.7
	Norfolk	21,966	770	....	1,092	....	1,862	96	10	106	90.2	89.4	4.9	5.3
	Petersburg	21,656	874	....	1,305	....	2,179	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Portsmouth	11,390	707	....	229	....	936	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	Richmond	63,600	4,658	....	2,519	....	7,177	52	6	58	98.6	98.4	0.7	0.8
West Virginia	Wheeling	30,737	179	....	338	446	963	1,802	120	1,922	30.2	*33.2	65.1	66.6
Wisconsin	Eau Claire	10,119	131	262	107	131	631	191	11	202	53.6	51.6	23.2	24.2
	Fond du Lac	13,094	208	302	364	188	1,062	472	24	496	38.8	36.4	30.6	31.8
	La Crosse	14,505	165	196	109	120	590	201	3	204	49.4	48.8	25.3	25.6
	Madison	10,324	128	461	215	374	1,178	245	21	266	65.6	63.2	17.2	18.4
	Milwaukee	115,587	746	852	1,483	1,161	4,242	1,467	203	1,670	48.8	43.6	25.6	28.2
	Oshkosh	15,748	282	245	307	148	982	410	38	448	41.2	37.4	29.4	31.3
	Racine	16,031	500	311	388	281	1,480	380	38	418	59.2	56.0	20.4	22.0

NOTE.—The figures in the above table for the Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Methodist Churches are taken from the most recent official sources. Where no reference is given, the Baptist statistics have been taken from State or associational minutes. Repeated letters of inquiry have failed to elicit any reply from a few cities where there are undoubtedly Baptist Churches. Where no official statistics could be secured the numbers given are estimates of a minister in the city, or other supposed authority. It has been impossible to obtain trustworthy figures for the number of colored Baptists in many cities, especially those of the South. In the Northern States the figures given in the table are supposed to include the colored membership, but wherever it has been possible to distinguish, the number of colored members has been given in the following foot-note.

COLORED BAPTISTS.—Mobile,b; Montgomery,a 1,483; Little Rock, b; Wilmington, (Del.,)115, (included in the 1,570 credited in table;) Georgetown,a 800; Washington,a 9,000; Atlanta,b; Augusta, 5,344; Columbus, 1,137; Macon,a 1,650; Savannah reports nearly 6,000, but informant thinks this much in excess of real strength; Springfield, (Ill.,) 115; Covington,b; Lexington,b; Louisville,b; Newport,b; New Orleans,a 7,250; Baltimore, 3,683; Vicksburg,a 600; Hannibal, 342; Kansas City, 417; St. Joseph, 372; St. Louis, 2,212; Wilmington, (N.C.,) a 600; Charleston,b; Columbia,b; Chattanooga,b; Memphis,a 9,500; Nashville,b; Austin,a 400; Dallas,b; Galveston,a 500; Houston,a 1,000; San Antonio,a 200; Alexandria, 1,035; Lynchburg, 750; Norfolk, 2,531; Petersburg, 5,910; Portsmouth, 1,100; Richmond, 10,406.

a Estimated.

b No report could be obtained.

B.

EDUCATION IN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

THE educational work of the Methodist Episcopal Church, after the failures which are elsewhere narrated in this volume, has been remarkable for its success and magnitude.

In the year 1831 Wesleyan University, at Middletown, Connecticut, was organized, with a faculty which only numbered 5, and with 48 students. Its pecuniary resources were small, though the amount is not given. The Rev. Dr. Wilbur Fisk, who was the first college graduate in the Methodist itinerancy, was its first president.

Fifty years later, namely, in 1881, its faculty numbered 20, its students 184, its pecuniary provision, including its property, $650,430, and its annual income $47,030. Its graduates had then reached the number of 1,291, "of whom 633 had been ministers, 48 college presidents, 674 professors and teachers, 249 lawyers, 73 physicians, 71 editors, 164 authors, besides many engaged in secular pursuits. The statistician of the university estimated that the 633 ministers among the graduates had spent 8,540 years in preaching." *

Soon after Wesleyan University began its career, Dickinson College came into the possession of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

This institution was incorporated in 1783, at a time when there were only seven colleges in the United States, namely: Harvard, Yale, Brown, and Dartmouth, in New England; William and Mary College, in Virginia; Columbia, in New York; and Princeton, in New Jersey.

Dickinson College is located at Carlisle, and was the first college in Pennsylvania. It became embarrassed by discord in the faculty, and by want of harmony between the faculty and trustees. As the result it was closed and its students dismissed. This was in 1832. Negotiations were opened which resulted in the transfer of the College, "with all its lands, buildings, fixtures, libraries, apparatus, etc., in a full and satisfactory manner, to a board of trustees, nominated by the Baltimore and Philadelphia Annual Conferences."

A movement for its endowment was organized, and the patronizing Conferences raised a subscription of $48,000. In September, 1834, the College was opened with the following faculty:

The Rev. John P. Durbin, A.M., President, and Professor of Moral Science; Merritt Caldwell, A.M., Professor of the Exact Sciences;

* The Rev. Daniel P. Kidder, D.D.

Robert Emory, A.M., Professor of Ancient Languages; Hon. John Reed, Professor of Law.

The subscription for the endowment could not all be collected, so that it resulted in considerably less cash than the $48,000 promised. As late as 1856 its endowment was under $100,000.

Wesleyan and Dickinson are the oldest existing colleges of the denomination. Since they were organized many others have risen in various parts of the country. Their names, property, endowment, indebtedness, together with the number of students, etc., appear in the tabulated statement which is given at the end of this Appendix.

The cause of education has developed great benefactors. Large contributions of money have been made by single individuals to this cause. The theological schools received the first great gifts. Daniel Drew, in 1866, subscribed a quarter of a million of dollars to found the school which bears his name at Madison, New Jersey, of which Dr. Buttz is now president. Mrs. Eliza Garrett, about ten years previously, had founded the School of Theology of the West at Evanston, Illinois. Her single contribution has chiefly maintained it, and the proceeds of her gift will continue to maintain it in the future. In New England Isaac Rich, a Methodist millionaire of Boston, by the bequest of his estate for that purpose, founded the Boston University. In New York George I. Seney has been a great giver to educational institutions. He has given in cash, or its equivalent, several hundred thousand dollars to Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. He has also given to two educational institutions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Oxford, Georgia, two hundred and sixty thousand dollars. Other gentlemen in the same region gave considerable sums to education, among the chief of whom were Oliver Hoyt, Esq.; David Campbell, of Newark, New Jersey; George J. Ferry, of Orange, New Jersey; and the late A. V. Stout, of New York. The late generous Cornelius Walsh, of Newark, New Jersey, also contributed to the same cause.

The greatest patron of Methodist education in the West is W. C. De Pauw, Esq. He has decided to devote much of his wealth to developing into greatness the university which now bears his name. The particulars of his work are given in the following sketch, kindly furnished for this volume by the Rev. H. A. Gobin, D.D., Professor of Greek in De Pauw University:

WASHINGTON CHARLES DE PAUW.

W. C. DE PAUW was born at Salem, Washington County, Indiana, on the 4th of January, 1822. As the name indicates, Mr. De Pauw is a descendant from a noble French family; his great grandfather, Cornelius, having been private reader to Frederick II., of Prussia, and author of several works of note. Charles De Pauw, the grandfather of W. C. De Pauw, was born at the city of Ghent, in French Flanders. When he arrived at a proper age he was sent to Paris to complete his education, and there became acquainted with Lafayette. At that time the struggle for American independence was just beginning. He became infatuated with the American cause, joined his fortunes to those of Lafayette, and sailed with that renowned commander to this country. He served throughout the war, and, by the close, became so thoroughly imbued with a love for America that he sought a wife in Virginia; thence he removed, with the first tide of emigration, to the blue-grass region of Kentucky. In that State General John De Pauw, the father of W. C. De Pauw, was born. On arriving at man's estate he moved from Kentucky to Washington County, Indiana. As agent for the county he surveyed, platted, and sold the lots in Salem, and purchased four acres of the high ground on the west side, upon which the family mansion was erected. He was by profession an attorney-at-law, and became a judge. He was also a general of militia. No man in his day enjoyed more of the confidence and good-will of his fellow-men than General John De Pauw. His wife, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Batist, (the mother of W. C. De Pauw,) was a woman of superior mind and of a strong and vigorous constitution. She died in 1878, at the advanced age of ninety-two years. At the age of sixteen Mr. De Pauw was thrown upon his own resources by the death of his father. He had only the meager education which that period and the surrounding circumstances would allow his parents to give; but, though young, he desired to be independent of friends and relatives, and accordingly set to work. He worked for two dollars a week, and when that was wanting he worked for nothing rather than be idle. That energy and industry, allied with character and ability, bring friends, proved true in his case. Major Eli W. Malott, the leading merchant of Salem, became interested in the young man. At the age of nineteen he entered the office of the county clerk, and, by his energy and faithfulness, he gained confidence, and soon had virtual control of the office. When he attained his majority he was

elected clerk of Washington County without opposition; to this office was adjoined, by the action of the State Legislature, that of auditor. Mr. De Pauw filled both of these positions until close application and the consequent severe mental strain impaired his health; after several prostrations, and, through fear of apoplexy, he acted on the advice of his physicians and gave up his sedentary pursuits. His extraordinary memory, quick but accurate judgment, and clear mental faculties, fitted him for a successful life. His early business career was like his political one; he was true and faithful, and constantly gained friends. His first investment was in a saw and grist mill, and this proving successful, he added mill after mill. With this business he combined farming, at the same time investing largely in the grain trade. It is hardly necessary to state that he was fortunate in each investment, and his means rapidly increased until, at the breaking out of the war, he had a large mercantile interest and a well-established bank. He was at the same time one of the largest grain dealers in the State of Indiana, and his knowledge of his trade and his command of means rendered him able to materially assist in furnishing the government with supplies. His patriotism and confidence in the success of the Union armies were such that he also invested a large amount in government securities. Here again he was successful, and at the close of the war had materially augmented his already large fortune. Mr. De Pauw has used his wealth freely to encourage manufactures and to build up the city of New Albany; he has made many improvements, and is largely interested in the rolling-mills and iron founderies of that city. He is now proprietor of De Pauw's American Plate-glass Works. This is a new and valuable industry, and the interests of our country require that it should be carried to success; it is a matter of national concern that American glass should surpass in quality and take the place of the French article in the markets of the world. Mr. De Pauw is now doing all in his power to promote this great end, and at present every thing points to the success of the undertaking. He has about two millions of dollars invested in manufacturing enterprises in the city of New Albany. Mr. De Pauw has been often forced to decline positions which his party were ready to give him, and in 1872 he was assured by many prominent Democrats that the nomination for governor was at his disposal. In the convention he was nominated for lieutenant-governor. In order to show the purposes and character of the man, let us quote a few words from his letter declining the nomination: "My early business life was spent in an intensely earnest struggle for success as

a manufacturer, grain-dealer, and banker. Since then I have found full work in endeavoring to assist in promoting the religious, benevolent, and educational interests of Indiana, and in helping to extend those advantages to the South and West. Hence I have neither the time nor inclination for politics. In these chosen fields of labor I find congenial spirits, whom I love and understand. My long experience gives me hope that I may accomplish something, perhaps much, for religion and humanity." These are noble words, and a true index of Mr. De Pauw's character. He has expended thousands of dollars in building churches and endowing benevolent institutions throughout this and the neighboring States; he has assisted many worthy young men to obtain an education, and has founded and kept in operation De Pauw College, a seminary of a high order for young ladies, at New Albany. Mr. De Pauw was for years a trustee of the State University at Bloomington, Indiana. He is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and has served as a delegate of the Indiana Conference at the General Conferences of that Church in 1872 and 1876. The part of his life most satisfactory to himself is that spent in his work for Christ in the church, in the Sunday-school, in the prayer-meeting, and in the every-day walks of life. He has been throughout life a thorough business man, full of honesty and integrity. He sought a fortune within himself, and found it in an earnest will and vast industry. He is eminently a self-made man, and stands out prominently to-day as one who, amid the cares of business, has ever preserved his reputation for honesty, integrity, and morality; who has never neglected the cause of religion, but has valued it, and still values it, above all others.

But the crowning beneficence of his life is the munificent endowment of the Indiana Asbury University. When it became known to the trustees of this institution that Mr. De Pauw proposed to apply the larger part of his estate to educational interests, they made overtures to him to secure his liberal offerings for Asbury University. "Old Asbury" was in a seriously crippled condition financially. Although the patronage was liberal and most encouraging, the proceeds of the endowment fund were much below the current expenses. On account of the scholarship plan adopted years ago it was not practicable to charge tuition. On account of the failure of several educational enterprises in various parts of the State the people had lost confidence in the permanent success of denominational schools. In this emergency the trustees, some of whom had been members of the Board from the very founding of the college, approached Mr. De Pauw with the proposition that if he would bestow upon Asbury

the liberal offerings which he proposed to make to the cause of education they would change the name of the institution to De Pauw University. At first the proposition meant that the name should stand as the memorial of Mr. De Pauw himself. But Mr. De Pauw accepted the proposal, with the understanding that the name should not be changed during his life-time, and that then the name of a deceased and dearly-loved daughter should be the conspicuous name in the memorial.

Mr. De Pauw prescribed two other simple conditions. The first was that the people of Greencastle and vicinity should furnish ample grounds for the future needs of the university, and that the Methodists of Indiana should raise $150,000, to make the endowment equal to the present needs of the university.

At the solicitation of the trustees and citizens of Greencastle the above conditions were so modified that Mr. De Pauw consented to accept $123,000 from the Church at large and $60,000 as the donation of Greencastle, instead of particular grounds formerly agreed upon. Mr. De Pauw has agreed to pay $2 for $1, that is, for the $183,000 paid in the general and local subscriptions he will pay $366,000. It is understood that forty-five per cent. of his estate will be bequeathed to the university. This plan secures to the university an endowment of over $1,000,000, and places it upon a broad and sure foundation of prosperity.

This eminent benefactor is a man of deep and consistent piety. He is a veteran in Sunday-school work, and leads a meeting devoted to entire consecration and holiness of heart and life.

THE METHODISTS OF MICHIGAN have undertaken, in connection with the Centennial anniversary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to develop their college at Albion by increasing its funds. In doing so they also propose to rear a Centennial monument to the chief founder and builder of the Church, Francis Asbury. The name of De Pauw having been substituted for that of Asbury at Greencastle, Indiana, Michigan has decided to honor its Methodist university by conferring upon it that immortal name. The Rev. James S. Smart, D.D., who raised a considerable amount for Heck Hall, Evanston, in the first centenary of American Methodism, is leading the movement in Michigan with his enthusiastic advocacy and energy. A very befitting result of the first centennial of the Church of Asbury would be such a memorial of his beneficent labors and achievements.

We present a tabulated statement of Methodist educational institutions as follows:

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

NAME OF INSTITUTION.	LOCATION.	Founded.	PRESIDENT OR PRINCIPAL.	Value of Buildings and Grounds.	Endowment.	Debts.	Teachers.	Students last year.	Students from beginning.
Albion College	Albion, Mich	1861	Rev. L. R. Fiske, D.D., LLD.	$75,000	$170,000	$12,000	20	362	9,633
Allegheny College	Meadville, Pa	1833	Rev. D. H. Wheeler, D.D.	300,000	200,000	....	12	218	6,116
Baker University	Baldwin City, Kan	1858	Rev. W. H. Sweet, A.M.	25,000	3,000	....	9	350	2,887
Baldwin University	Berea, Ohio	1845	A. Schuyler, LL.D.	60,000	150,000	....	10	202	6,400
Blue Mountain University	La Grande, Oregon	1876	Rev. G. M. Irwin, A.M.	20,000	....	....	4	75	150
Boston University	Boston, Mass	1869	William F. Warren, S.T.D., LL.D.	130,000	1,049,536	155,974	98	596	4,263
Central Tennessee College	Nashville, Tenn	1866	Rev. J. Braden, D.D.	50,000	10,000	....	12	361	2,797
Central Wesleyan College	Warrenton, Mo	1864	Rev. H. A. Koch, D.D.	45,000	30,000	....	11	231	3,033
Chaddock College	Quincy, Ill	1853	John T. Long, LL.D.	200,000	....	....	31	308	3,000
Claflin University	Orangeburg, S. C.	1869	Rev. Edward Cooke, D.D.	50,000	....	....	10	424	1,600
Clark University	Atlanta, Ga	1869	Rev. E. O. Thayer, A.M.	120,000	20,000	....	10	158	1,125
Cornell College	Mount Vernon, Iowa	1857	Rev. William F. King, D.D.	130,000	60,000	....	22	509	4,675
Dickinson College	Carlisle, Pa	1833	J. A. M'Cauley, D.D., LL.D.	350,000	240,000	....	9	129	2,277
East Tennessee Wesleyan University	Athens, Tenn	1867	Rev. John F. Spence, S.T.D.	30,000	1,000	....	8	224	1,800
Fort Wayne College	Fort Wayne, Ind	1846	Rev. W. F. Yocum, D.D.	35,000	....	1,200	10	307	3,775
German College	Mount Pleasant, Iowa	1873	Rev. William Balcke, A.M.	15,000	20,000	....	4	120	503
German-English College	Galena, Ill	1868	Rev. Emil Uhl	6,000	1,600	....	7	113	1,535
German Wallace College	Berea, Ohio	1864	Rev. William Nast, D.D	53,710	51,124	....	6	91	889
Hamline University	Hamline, Minn	1854	Rev. G. H. Bridgman, D.D.	100,000	135,000	....	7	119	2,200
Hedding College	Abingdon, Ill	1875	Rev. Joseph S. Cummings, D.D.	50,000	1,000	19,000	10	184	1,584
Illinois Wesleyan University	Bloomington, Ill	1855	Rev. W. H. H. Adams, D.D.	150,000	70,000	....	22	647	4,795
Indiana Asbury University	Greencastle, Ind	1837	Rev. Alexander Martin, D.D., LL.D.	267,904	218,510	....	16	509	10,000
Iowa Wesleyan University	Mount Pleasant, Iowa	1850	Rev. W. J. Spaulding, Ph.D.	45,000	85,000	5,500	9	282	6,000
Lawrence University	Appleton, Wis	1849	Rev. B. P. Raymond, A.M., Ph.D.	50,000	69,149	....	9	189	4,703
Lewis College	Glasgow, Mo	1866	Rev. James C. Hall, A.M.	50,000	1,000	15,000	8	63	476
Little Rock University	Little Rock, Ark	1882	Rev. George W. Gray, D.D.	50,000	....	....	15	206	206
M'Kendree College	Lebanon, Ill	1828	Rev. William F. Swahlen, A.M., Ph.D.	50,000	65,000	....	9	188	5,260
Methodist Episcopal College of Neb.	York, Nebraska	1880	Rev. Edward Thomson, Ph.D.	21,000	16,000	4,000	18	382	695
Moore's Hill College	Moore's Hill, Ind	1854	Rev. L. D. Adkinson, A.M.	30,000	20,000	4,000	7	139	2,300
Mount Union College	Mount Union, Ohio	1846	Rev. O. N. Hartshorne, LL.D.	100,000	....	....	12	512	17,038
New Orleans University	New Orleans, La	1873	Rev. James A. Dean, D.D.	25,000	....	....	7	231	1,947
North-western University	Evanston, Ill	1855	Rev. Joseph Cummings, D.D., LL.D.	263,500	1,184,048	10,000	60	964	6,263
Ohio Wesleyan University	Delaware, Ohio	1842	Rev. C. H. Payne, D.D., LL.D.	200,000	300,000	....	25	783	10,300
Philander Smith College	Little Rock, Ark	1877	Rev. Thomas Mason, A.M.	16,000	....	....	3	182	250
Rust University	Holly Springs, Miss	1869	Rev. W. H. Hooper, A.M.	40,000	10,000	....	8	291	937
Simpson Centenary College	Indianola, Iowa	1867	Rev. E. L. Parks, A.M., B.D.	25,000	40,000	....	8	268	2,265

Syracuse University	Syracuse, N. Y.	1870	Rev. Charles N. Sims, D.D., LL.D.	300,000	330,000	99,000	37	385	1,462
Texas Wesleyan College	Fort Worth, Tex.	1880	Percival M. White, B.A.	12,000	....	....	4	100	175
University of Denver	Denver, Col.	1880	Rev. David H. Moore, D.D.	110,000	....	2,500	40	405	501
University of the Pacific	San José, Cal.	1851	Rev. C. C. Stratton, A.M., D.D.	52,500	35,000	....	15	266	1,816
University of Southern California	Los Angeles, Cal.	1880	Rev. M. M. Bovard, A.M.	25,000	90,000	....	10	156	439
Upper Iowa University	Fayette, Iowa	1857	Rev. John W. Bissell, D.D.	35,000	20,000	....	12	243	4,150
Wesleyan University	Middletown, Conn.	1831	John W. Beach, D.D., LL.D.	400,000	800,000	....	18	192	2,400
Willamette University	Salem, Oregon	1844	Rev. Thomas Van Scoy, A.M., B.D.	80,000	27,000	5,000	26	336	6,400
Wiley University	Marshall, Texas	1873	Rev. W. H. Davis, A.M.	1,500	....	....	5	313	1,220

In addition to the above colleges there are also six seminaries and colleges exclusively for the education of girls. They are as follows:

FEMALE COLLEGES AND SEMINARIES.

Name of Institution.	Location.	Founded.	President or Principal.	Value of Buildings and Grounds.	Endowment.	Debts.	Teachers.	Students last year.	Students from beginning.
Beaver College and Musical Institute	Beaver, Pa.	1853	Rev. R. T. Taylor, D.D.	$50,000	....	$8,000	12	150	1,580
Cincinnati Wesleyan College	Cincinnati, Ohio	1842	Rev. W. K. Brown, D.D.	200,000	....	....	29	120	6,516
De Pauw College	New Albany, Ind.	1866	Rev. F. A. Friedley, A.M.	50,000	....	....	9	138	1,232
Drew Seminary and Female College	Carmel, N. Y.	1866	George Crosby Smith, A.M.	40,000	....	....	8	68	550
Hillsborough Female College	Hillsborough, Ohio	1854	Rev. J. F. Lloyd, A.M.	50,000	6,000	....	10	69	3,040
Illinois Female College	Jacksonville, Ill	1847	Rev. W. F. Short, A.M., D.D.	100,000	....	....	15	175	5,060
Lasell Seminary for Young Women	Auburndale, Mass.	1851	Charles C. Bragdon, A.M.	90,000	....	40,000	24	150	2,000
Pittsburg Female College	Pittsburg, Pa.	1854	Rev. I. C. Pershing, D.D.	100,000	12,000	14,000	28	434	4,000

The Methodist Episcopal Church has also a large number of Classical Seminaries. Their location, names, amount of property, indebtedness, endowment, etc., are thus set forth:

CLASSICAL SEMINARIES.

Name of Institution.	Location.	Founded.	President or Principal.	Value of Buildings and Grounds.	Endowment.	Debts.	Teachers.	Students last year.	Students from beginning.
Albion Seminary	Albion, Iowa	1872	Edward P. Fogg, A.M.	$9,000	$2,000	$2,700	6	300	750
Andrews Institute	Andrews Institute, Ala	1867	Rev. Wm. Houston, A.M.	5,000	....	....	5	175	789
Ashland College and Normal School	Ashland, Oregon	1879	Rev. W. G. Royal, A.M.	10,000	....	1,200	5	123	329

CLASSICAL SEMINARIES.—*Continued.*

NAME OF INSTITUTION.	LOCATION.	Founded.	PRESIDENT OR PRINCIPAL.	Value of Buildings and Grounds	Endowment.	Debts.	Teachers.	Students last year.	Students from beginning.
Augusta Collegiate Institute	Augusta, Ky	1882	Rev. Daniel Stevenson, D.D	$10,000	....	....	6	72	113
Baldwin Seminary	Baldwin, La	1882	Rev. W. S. Fitch, A.M	20,000	....	....	2	56	68
Bennett Seminary	Greensborough, N. C.	1873	Rev. Wilbur F. Steele, A.M., B.D	15,000	....	....	6	153	471
Brown Seminary	Leicester, N. C	1881	Henry F. Ketron, A.B	2,000	....	....	1	62	134
Carleton Institute	Farmington, Mo	1854	Miss Eliza A. Carleton	16,000	....	$800	5	147	1,800
Cazenovia Seminary	Cazenovia, N. Y	1825	Rev. J. D. Phelps, A.M	66,000	$12,000	2,000	10	413	15,000
Centenary Collegiate Institute	Hackettstown, N. J	1874	Rev. George H. Whitney, D.D	210,000	....	...	14	220	1,500
Chamberlain Institute	Randolph, N. Y	1850	Rev. James T. Edwards, A.M., D.D.	64,000	40,000	....	12	510	10,000
Claverack Acad. & Hudson Riv. Inst.	Claverack, N. Y	1854	Rev. Alonzo Flack, Ph.D	61,000	...	....	18	267	5,800
Cookman Institute	Jacksonville, Fla	1874	Rev. Samuel B. Darnell, B.D	15,000	....	400	6	274	525
East Maine Conference Seminary	Bucksport, Me	1850	Rev. Morris W. Prince, A.M	30,000	18,000	....	8	315	5,800
Ellijay Seminary	Ellijay, Ga	1874	Rev. M. G. Bates	5,000	....	....	2	130	650
Epworth Seminary	Epworth, Iowa	1857	George W. Jones, Ph.B	10,000	....	....	10	234	2,734
Forest Home Seminary	Headland, Ala	1883	C. J. Hammitt, B.D	2,500	....	....	2	46	46
Fort Edward Collegiate Institute	Fort Edward, N. Y	1854	Rev. Joseph E. King, D.D	80,000	....	15,000	13	306	10,300
Genesee Wesleyan Seminary	Lima, N. Y	1830	Rev. W. G. Williams, A.M	70,000	64,000	....	11	335	30,300
Grand Prairie Seminary & Com. Coll.	Onarga, Ill	1863	Rev. John B. Robinson, D.D	20,000	16,000	....	12	250	2,823
Greenwich Academy	East Greenwich, R. I.	1841	Rev. F. D. Blakeslee, A.M	80,000	....	30,000	10	224	6,348
Haven Normal School	Waynesborough, Ga	1868	Rev. J. N. Cardozo	4,000	....	....	2	75	1,000
Holston Seminary	New Market, Tenn	1838	S. P. Fowler, A.M	10,000	....	350	5	147	225
Houston Seminary	Houston, Texas	1882	C. W. Campbell, Ph.B	7,500	....	....	2	151	151
Ives Seminary	Antwerp, N. Y	1868	Rev. C. E. Hawkins, A.M	33,000	....	....	10	275	2,200
Jennings Seminary	Aurora, Ill	1857	Rev. Thomas J. Bassett, A.M	60,000	....	....	13	396	5,900
Kingsley Seminary	Bloomingdale, Tenn	1877	Joseph H. Ketron, A.M	2,200	....	....	4	136	329
La Grange Seminary	La Grange, Ga	1878	O. D. Wagner, A.B	4,000	....	....	2	120	400
La Teche Seminary	Baldwin, La	1875	Rev. W. D. Godman, D.D	....	....	....	6	247	600
Lewis Collegiate Institute	Lewiston, Idaho	1882	Rev. Levi Tarr, A.M	20,000	....	....	3	54	80
Maine Wesleyan Sem. & Female Coll.	Kent's Hill, Me	1821	Rev. E. M. Smith, A.M	100,000	63,000	....	11	303	30,135
Marionville Collegiate Institute	Marionville, Mo	1878	John Turrentine, A.M	10,000	....	....	5	222	932
Meridian Academy	Meridian, Miss	1877	Mrs. M. V. Keever	2,500	...	....	3	107	325
Morristown Seminary	Morristown, Tenn	1881	Rev. J. S. Hill, A.M	5,000	3,000	....	3	175	496
Mount Union Seminary	Mount Union, Ala	1880	Rev. James Rogers, A.M	450	....	....	1	61	225
Mount Zion Seminary	Mount Zion, Ga	1880	Rev. James Mitchell, D.D	1,500	....	....	2	113	250
Napa Collegiate Institute	Napa City, Cal	1870	A. E. Lasher, A.M	40,000	....	....	11	200	1,540
New Hamp. Conf. Sem. & Female Coll	Tilton, N. H	1845	Rev. Silas E. Quimby, A.M	25,000	16,000	....	11	350	6,565
Ogden Seminary	Ogden City, Utah	1872	Rev. W. A. Adkinson, A.M	5,000	....	....	3	142	600

Pennington Seminary	Pennington, N. J.	1859	Rev. Thomas Hanlon, D.D.	75,000	....	25,000	12	157	6,947
Powell's Valley Seminary	Wellspring, Tenn.	1880	W. A. Wright, A.M.	2,000	....	....	4	150	275
Roanoke Seminary	Roanoke, Va.	1883	Rev. J. E. Deacon	....	....	....	2	42	42
Rust Normal Institute	Huntsville, Ala.	1870	Mrs. John W. Raines	7,000	....	....	3	60	500
Salt Lake Seminary	Salt Lake City, Utah.	1871	Rev. T. C. Iliff, A.M.	10,000	....	....	8	167	1,400
Sheridan Academy	Sheridan, Oregon.	1874	Rev. W. T. Van Scoy	3,500	....	....	3	90	485
Texarkana Gymnasium	Texarkana, Ark.	1882	Le Roy Bates, Ph.D.	300	....	....	5	154	154
Troy Conference Academy	Poultney, Vt.	1835	Rev. Charles H. Dunton, A.M.	60,000	3,000	9,000	11	262	4,850
Umpqua Academy	Wilbur, Oregon.	1854	Henry L. Benson, A.M.	5,000	....	....	4	130	1,200
Vermont Meth. Sem. & Female Coll.	Montpelier, Vt.	1834	Rev. J. D. Beeman, A.M.	90,000	34,000	28,000	10	235	13,335
Wesleyan Academy	Wilbraham, Mass.	1824	Rev. Geo. M. Steele, S.T.D., LL.D.	150,000	....	18,000	13	300	17,000
Western Reserve Seminary	West Farmington, O.	1829	Rev. A. E. M'Bride, A.M.	18,000	2,700	....	6	100	10,100
West Tennessee Seminary	Hollow Rock, Tenn.	1874	Rev. Joseph J. Losier	3,000	....	....	2	102	342
West Tennessee Preparatory School	Mason, Tenn.	1877	Rev. E. E. Alexander	1,000	....	....	2	126	370
West Texas Conference Seminary	Austin, Texas.	1878		....	....	....	..	..	....
Warren Seminary	Fullen's, Tenn.	1883	Rev. J. C. Wright, A.M.	10,000	....	....	4	153	300
Williamsport Dickinson Seminary	Williamsport, Pa.	1848	Rev. Edward J. Gray, D.D.	80,000	....	....	13	283	7,172
Wilmington Conference Academy	Dover, Del.	1873	R. H. Skinner, A.M.	50,000	....	20,000	8	146	638
Wyoming Seminary	Kingston, Pa.	1844	Rev. L. L. Sprague, A.M.	150,000	....	2,000	18	401	15,000
Xenia Seminary	Xenia, Ohio.	1850	W. H. DeMotte, LL.D.	10,000	....	2,350	7	112	2,060

In addition to the above, the Church has the following mission schools in foreign lands:

FOREIGN MISSION SCHOOLS.

Anglo-Japanese University	Tokio, Japan.	1879	Rev. R. S. Maclay, D.D.	10,000	....	....	9	150	355
Bareilly Orphanage & Board'g Sch'l.	Bareilly, India.	1870	Miss F. J. Sparkes	15,500	....	....	10	286	800
Bijnour Christian Girls' School	Bijnour, India.	1877	Miss D'Abrue	5,550	....	....	4	48	72
Caroline Wright Seminary	Hakodati, Japan.	1880	Miss M. S. Hampton	6,000	.. ..	....	2	24	35
Cawnpore Girls' High School	Cawnpore, India.	1877	Miss S. A. Easton	7,000	....	....	4	73	178
Centennial High School	Lucknow, India.	1866	Rev. James W. Waugh, A.M., D.D.	12,000	5,000	500	12	326	559
Cobleigh Seminary	Nagasaki, Japan.	1881	Rev. C. S. Long	2,000	....	....	3	40	85
Foochow Boarding School	Foochow, China.	1859	Miss B. Woolston	6,000	....	....	2	30	150
Kaigon Jogakko	Tokio, Japan.	1874	Miss Holbrook	12,000	....	....	12	70	170
Kiukiang Boarding School	Kiukiang, China.	1872	Miss G. Howe	7,000	....	....	2	30	150
Kuwatsu Sui Jogakko	Nagasaki, Japan.	1879	Misses Russell and Gheer	9,000	...	....	5	70	102
Lucknow Anglo-Vernacular School	Lucknow, India.	1870	Miss I. Thoburn	12,000	....	....	5	117	357
Memorial School	Cawnpore, India.	1874	Rev. F. L. Neeld, A.M., B.D.	20,000	....	2,000	6	85	468
Moradabad Girls' Boarding School	Moradabad, India.	1868	Miss Esther De Vine	5,500	....	....	7	108	258
Pachuca Girls' School	Pachuca, Mexico.	1874	Miss M. Hastings	5,500	....	....	4	90	270
Peking Boarding School	Peking, China	1872	Miss Cushman	7,376	....	....	2	49	115
Rangoon Girls' School	Rangoon, Burmah.	1881	Miss E. H. Warner	18,000	....	....	5	88	143
Rosario Seminary	Rosario, S. A.	1874	Misses Chapin and Denning	10,000	....	....	3	40	180
Sigier Boarding School	Budaon, India.	1875	Rev. R. Hoskins	4,000	....	....	4	62	90

There are also several professional and musical schools which are classified as follows:

MEDICAL SCHOOLS.

Schools of Medicine are connected with Boston University, Hamline University, North-western University, Syracuse University, University of Denver, and the Central Tennessee College. That of the latter is entitled the Meharry Medical College, after its founder.

SCHOOLS OF LAW

Are connected with Boston University, Illinois Wesleyan University, North-western University, and Syracuse University.

SCHOOLS OF MUSIC AND ART.

Academy of Music and Art in Illinois Female College; College of Music in Boston University; College of Music and Art in Illinois Wesleyan University; College of Fine Arts in Syracuse University; Conservatory of Music in Pittsburg Female College.

The Theological Schools of the Church now number half a score:

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS.

Name of Institution.	Location.	Founded.	President or Principal.	Value of Buildings and Grounds.	Endowment.	Debts.	Teachers.	Students last year.	Students from beginning.
Bareilly Theological Seminary	Bareilly, India	1871	Rev. T. J. Scott, D.D.	$12,500	$50,000	....	6	60	172
Boston University School of Theol'y	Boston, Mass	1847	Rev. William F. Warren, S.T.D.	....	....	....	10	92	474
Centenary Biblical Institute	Baltimore, Md	1872	Rev. William M. Frysinger, D.D.	30,000	1,500	$1,000	6	154	569
Drew Theological Seminary	Madison, N. J.	1866	Rev. Henry A. Buttz, D.D.	250,000	300,000	....	6	83	579
Foochow Biblical Institute	Foochow, China	1872	Rev. F. Ohlinger	....	....	....	2	10	50
Gammon Theo. School of Clark Univ	Atlanta, Ga	1883	Rev. W. P. Thirkield, A.M., D.D.	30,000	20,000	....	2	9	9
Garrett Biblical Institute	Evanston, Ill	1856		50,000	300,000	25,000	7	103	1,149
Japan M. E. Theological School	Tokio, Japan	1879	Rev. M. S. Vail	....	....	....	3	11	30
Martin Mission Institute	Frankfort, Germany	1858	Rev. Ludwig Nippert, D.D.	50,000	2,000	....	2	13	116
Mexican School of Theology	Puebla, Mexico	1874	Rev. S. W. Siberts, A.M.	18,000	....	....	4	12	27

SUMMARY.

CLASS INSTITUTION.	No.	Value of Buildings and Grounds.	Endowments.	Debts.	No. of Teachers.	Stud'nts last year.	Students from the beginning.
Theological Institutions.....	10	$440,500	$673,500	$26,000	48	547	3,175
Colleges and Universities....	45	4,433,114	6,060,976	345,174	733	14,375	162,273
Classical Seminaries,.....	59	1,855,400	273,700	156,300	388	10,729	219,953
Female Colleges and Semin's	8	680,000	18,000	62,000	135	1,154	23,978
Foreign Mission Schools.....	19	175,626	5,000	2,500	101	1,886	4,537
	141	$7,584,640	$7,031,176	$592,474	1405	28,591	413,906

PROGRESS AND INCREASE IN EIGHTEEN YEARS.

	In 1865.	In 1883.	Increase.
Theological Institutions.....	2	10	8
Colleges and Universities.....	23	45	22
Classical Seminaries and Female Colleges....	77	86	9
Whole number of Institutions.....	102	142	39
Total number of Teachers.....	714	1,405	691
Total number of Students.....	23,106	28,591	5,485
Value of Buildings and Endowments,.....	$3,055,000	$14,023 342	$10,968,342
Students from the beginning.....	.....	413,906	.....

The present character, demands, and condition of the educational work of the Methodist Episcopal Church have been very lucidly and thoroughly summarized by the Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Education, the Rev. Dr. Kidder, in his report to the Centennial General Conference of 1884. It may, without invidiousness, be said that few men have accomplished a greater work in the field of Methodist education than this able worker gives promise of achieving by the end of the first decade of the Church's second century. While the results of the collections on Children's Day in 1884 are not yet fully ascertained, it is known that the amount contributed will quite exceed fifty thousand dollars. This result is largely due to the wise plans originated by Dr. Kidder.

The Education Fund of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was founded by Centenary gifts in 1866, now amounts to about two hundred thousand dollars, and is increasing. The interest of this fund, and the annual collections of "Children's Day," are to be appropriated hereafter, so far as shall be necessary, to assisting youthful members of the Church in acquiring an education in the schools and colleges of the Church.

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